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Reason and Experience in Tibetan Buddhism

Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü and the traditions of the Middle Way

Thomas Doctor

ROUTLEDGE

Reason and Experience in Tibetan Buddhism

Based on newly discovered texts, this book explores the barely known but tremendously influential thought of the Tibetan Buddhist teacher, Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü (d. 1185). This Tibetan Buddhist master exercised significant influence on the interpretation of Madhyamaka thinking in Tibet during the formative phase of Tibetan Buddhism and plays a key role in the religious thought of his day and beyond.

The book studies the framework of Mabja's philosophical project, holding it up against the works of both his own Madhyamaka teachers as well as those of central authors of the later "classical period." The emerging account of the evolution of Madhyamaka in Tibet reveals a striking pattern of transformative appropriations. This, in turn, affords us insights into the nature and function of tradition in Tibetan religious culture and Mahāyāna Buddhism at large. Innovation is demanded for both the advancement and consolidation of tradition.

This groundbreaking book is an invaluable contribution to the study of Tibetan philosophy. Of great interest to specialists in Buddhist philosophy and Tibetan Buddhism, this book is an illuminating read for all scholars and practitioners of the Madhyamaka.

Thomas Doctor recently received his PhD from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. He works as an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Buddhist Studies at Kathmandu University in Nepal.

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Introduction

Madhyamaka teachers of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, such as Tsongkhapa Losang Drakpa (Tib. *Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa*, 1357–1419), stand at the heart of the Tibetan traditions that reach us today. Yet, without access to the works of their predecessors, it has, for us, seemed as if their interpretations appeared out of nowhere. These later, now classical, authors do refer to teachers before them, yet typically very briefly and often in ways that are mutually conflicting. With the recent discoveries of previously unavailable text material, we are now in a position to understand the central issues that these later thinkers responded to and developed. Specifically, we now can examine the works of key Tibetan authors from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and so witness the emergence of the themes that have continued to inform, provoke, and inspire Tibetan Madhyamaka discussions up until today. Scholars such as Georges Dreyfus,[1] Pascale Hugon,[2] Helmuth Tauscher,[3] Kevin Vose,[4] and Chizuko Yoshimizu[5] have begun such research that is of fundamental importance to understanding the intellectual history of Tibet.

This book explores the philosophical and exegetical project of Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü (Tib. *rMa bya byang chub brtson 'grus*, d. 1185),[6] who appeared at a central crossroads in the cultural and intellectual evolution of Madhyamaka Buddhism: the period when the works of the seventh-century Indian teacher, Candrakīrti, were being translated and transmitted into Tibet. According to several sources,[7] Mabja was among the foremost students in the circle surrounding the renowned Tibetan logician and epistemologist, Chapa Chökyi Seng-ge (Tib. *Phya pa chos kyi senge*, 1109–69).[8] Yet, contrary to Chapa, who is known for his thoroughgoing criticism of Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka interpretation, Mabja embraced the teaching of Candrakīrti's newly translated texts. Having studied with the translator Patsab Nyima Drakpa (Tib. *Pa tshab nyi ma grags pa*, b. 1055)[9] and, according to some, the Kashmiri *paṇḍita* Jayānanda (fl. twelfth century),[10] Mabja taught extensively and produced several Madhyamaka treatises and commentaries. With his stern revision and transformative re-employment of the epistemological framework that Candrakīrti otherwise scorns, Mabja developed, as we shall see, an original and highly influential Madhyamaka interpretation. Closely associated with both the primary exponents and adversaries of Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka, his discussions throw a rich light on this crucial and yet little known period of Tibetan intellectual history.

In the academy, the first treatments of Mabja's Madhyamaka take place in two articles by Paul Williams that were carried in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* in the mid-'80s.[11] Ruegg 2000,[12] Vose 2009,[13] and Doctor 2009 have continued the explorations, and in 2011 appeared the *Ornament of Reason*,[14] an English translation of Mabja's extensive commentary (Tib. *dBu ma rtsa ba shes rab kyi 'grel pa 'thad pa'i rgyan*) to Nāgārjuna's (fl. 150–250) *Root of the Middle Way* (Skt. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*). Beyond this translation and the aforementioned pioneering works, Mabja's Madhyamaka has, however, hardly been visited by modern scholarship. Moreover, as for the later Tibetan Madhyamaka literature, although Mabja's interpretations reappear in a number of important works, they are rarely explicitly acknowledged. As we shall see, Mabja provides a conceptual framework that is crucial to the thought of Tsongkhapa, and yet this deep link with later Gelug (Tib. *dGe lugs*) philosophy not withstanding, he is also the source of central Madhyamaka exegesis in the works of Tsongkhapa's formidable adversaries, such as Gorampa Sönam Seng-ge (Tib. *Go ram pa bSod nam seng ge*, 1429–89). Mabja's Madhyamaka, which itself can be seen as a creative synthesis of opposing eleventh–twelfth-century schools of thought, has been relied on extensively but rarely explicitly. His views and interpretations turn out to have exercised a deep and lasting influence within all of the traditions that are now referred to as the "four schools" (Tib. *chos lugs bzhi*) of Buddhism in Tibet.

Content and structure of this book

Reason and Experience in Tibetan Buddhism explores Mabja's dominant and yet barely acknowledged Madhyamaka interpretation. It provides a close reading and analysis of the key features in Mabja's philosophical project, thus pursuing an in-depth understanding of his metaphysically non-committal and epistemologically fallibilist concern for "precisely the thing that appears" (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po 'di nyid*). On this basis, the book proceeds to examine the development, reception, and transmission of Mabja's Madhyamaka doctrine through the centuries. We read the authors of the eleventh and twelfth centuries who appear to have been Mabja's primary sources of inspiration, and examine the impact of Mabja's thought on paradigmatic fourteenth-to-sixteenth-century scholars, who all play central roles in the self-identification of the so-called "four schools" (Tib. *chos lugs bzhi*). What emerges through such textual studies is the framework for a history of Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka in Tibet, taking us from the otherwise obscure origins of the "Consequentialist/Autonomist distinction" (Tib. *thal rang gi khyad par*) through to the classical formulations of this much debated hermeneutical device.

The book is divided into four sections. Section 1 begins by providing the details of what we know of Mabja's life and activity from Tibetan accounts of the "origins of the Dharma" (Tib. *chos 'byung*) and references in the works of other authors. This is followed by an introduction to the Indian and early Tibetan philosophical developments that provide the background for the Madhyamaka discussions that take place in Tibet in the twelfth century.

Section 2 studies the hallmarks of Mabja's Madhyamaka,[15] zooming in on his views on the status of appearance/experience (Tib. *snang ba*) within the two truths (Skt. *satyadvaya*, Tib. *bden pa gnyis*) model and analyzing his complex account of "reliable means of cognition" (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *tshad ma*). Seeking to introduce the reader to the word and thought of its protagonist as directly as possible, the book provides translations of key passages from Mabja's corpus, combining them within a quite tightly woven, explanatory fabric.[16] Deeply committed to a Candrakīrtian analysis of all mundane consciousness as thoroughly delusional (Skt. *bhrānta*, Tib. *'khrul pa*), Mabja sharply rejects any claims to infallible certainty. Yet with equal force he insists on both the achievability and necessity of an accurate and sophisticated account of reliable means of knowledge. Mabja's philosophical project arises out of this daunting, dual commitment. *Reason and Experience in Tibetan Buddhism* shows how, for him, the reconciliation of these demands must be found through respect for "precisely the thing that appears" (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po 'di nyid*), yet without thereby becoming seduced into constructing a doctrine of either incontrovertible experience or irrefutable emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*, Tib. *stong pa nyid*). Mabja's Madhyamaka thus expresses, as the book will suggest, an anti-metaphysical commitment to experience that can become concrete and effective only through the explicit acknowledgment of its own natural imperfection.

Having introduced and analyzed the central elements in Mabja's philosophical project, the book's Section 3 begins with a study of the views of Mabja's reported teachers in relation to his own interpretation, thereby offering us a firsthand perspective on the deep epistemological differences that separate these early authors. From the outset certain Tibetan followers of Candrakīrti have, as we shall see, been charging their Mādhyamika opponents with an unacknowledged commitment to ultimately real entities, and we will notice how this in turn has made followers of Candrakīrti appear nihilist in the eyes of thinkers such as Chapa and his intellectual heirs. The book further concludes that the tendencies of later Tibetan thinkers to either sharply accentuate or greatly downplay the philosophical and soteriological implications of Candrakīrti's *pramāṇa* critique are by no means new, for they emerge right at the time of the translation of Candrakīrti's works.

Despite the initial intense debates about the legitimacy of Candrakīrti's project, later masters such as Longchen Rabjam (Tib. *Klong chen rab 'byams*, 1308–64), Tsongkhapa, Gorampa, and Karmapa Mikyö Dorje (Tib. *Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje*, 1507–54) all agree in ascribing the highest value to Candrakīrti's interpretation. When these masters each formulate their own distinct version of a superior Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka, they all in fact incorporate – electively and often without any acknowledgement – Mabja's works in both form and substance. In Section 3.2 we will explore the character and extent of these surprising appropriations. Mabja distinguishes, as we shall see, flawless Madhyamaka of the Candrakīrtian orientation from the soteriologically flawed approach of the Autonomists (Skt.**svātantrika*, Tib. *rang rgyud pa*), who hold that the relative reality (Skt. *saṃvṛtisatya*, Tib. *kun rdzob kyi bden pa*) is "established by particular

characteristics" (Tib. *rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*). Hence, even though he would balk at Mabja's rejection of all views (Skt. *dṛṣṭi*, Tib. *lta ba*) in terms of the ultimate (Skt. *paramārtha*, Tib. *don dam*), it is clear that Tsongkhapa to a large extent constructs his central epistemological apparatus in conformity with Mabja.

Although Tsongkhapa appears to have drawn on ideas developed by Mabja, his critics, such as Gorampa and Mikyö Dorje, also are influenced by Mabja's views. Go ram pa's "own" commentary to the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* (Tib. *yang dag lta ba'i 'od zer*), consists thus almost exclusively of citations from Mabja's commentary, the *Ornament of Reason* (Tib. *'thad pa'i rgyan*). Nevertheless, Gorampa does not indicate that any of this material is coming from Mabja's text. Mikyö Dorje, on the other hand, denies any view at all on behalf of Candrakīrtian Madhyāmikas, and this contrasts with Mabja's account of the issue. However, Mikyö Dorje declares Mabja to be the central Tibetan authority behind his presentation of the two truths (Skt. *satyadvaya*, Tib. *bden pa gnyis*). Thus, while relied on selectively, and most often not with explicit acknowledgement, it is clear that Mabja's Madhyamaka interpretation has remained at the heart of Tibetan Madhyamaka discussions up to today.

Having pointed out the perhaps quite stunning transformations that Mabja's views undergo through the centuries, Section 3 concludes with reflections on the nature of "lineage" (Tib. *brgyud pa*) and traditional authority within the larger context of Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy. Appealing to and allegiance with an ideal lineage of sheer perfection are certainly of crucial importance to the task of the exegete. Yet we notice at the same time a marked drive towards highlighting one's own originality, as well as, from the perspective of modern scholarship, a quite amazing sense of liberty in terms of how one's predecessors may be represented or appropriated. The book suggests that this strikingly undaunted and creative relation to the scriptural and philosophical heritage has always been among the central factors employed in both the advancement and the consolidation of the Buddhist traditions in Tibet.

Subsequent to the study described above, Section 4 of this book features an annotated bilingual translation of the verses of Mabja's newly discovered "*The Appearance of Reality – An Ornament to the Collections of Middle Way Reasoning*" (Tib. *dBu ma rigs pa'i tshogs kyi rgyan de kho na nyid snang ba*), in which the author provides a succinct and yet comprehensive account of the nature and scope of the Madhyamaka philosophical project. The translation of the verses has been arranged so as to incorporate the topical outline found in Mabja's autocommentary to the stanzas.

Notes

1 Dreyfus 2009 and 2010.
2 Hugon 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, 2011, and forthcoming.
3 Tauscher's 1999 edition of Chapa Chökyi Seng-ge's *Middle Way of the Three Easterners* (in *Phya pa chos kyi seṅ ge* 1999) as well as Tauscher 2003 and 2010.
4 Vose 2009a, 2009b, and 2010.
5 Yoshimizu 2005, 2009a, and 2009b.

6 Based on Shönnu Pal's (1392–1481) statement that Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü departed in the seventeenth year following the earth-female-ox-year in which Chapa had passed (*Blue Annals*, 400) we may see 1185 as the year of his demise.

7 See below, pp. 12–13 n. 8.

8 On Chapa's Madhyamaka interpretation, see Vose 2009b and 2010, Tauscher 2003 and 2010, Ruegg 2000, and Hugon (forthcoming). On his theory of "realiable means of cognition" (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *Tshad ma*), see Hugon 2004, 2008a, 2008b, 2009a, 2009b, and 2011, and Stolz 2009.

9 On Patsab, see Lang 1990, Ruegg 2000, Dreyfus 2009 and 2010, and Vose 2009b.

10 On Jayānanda, see van der Kuijp 1993, Vose 2009b and 2010, and Ruegg 2000.

11 Williams 1984 and 1985.

12 Pp. 53–55, 163–68, and 190–94.

13 Pp. 55–56 and 81–84.

14 Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü 2011.

15 Parts of the discussion in Section 2 have appeared in Doctor 2009.

16 While the discussion here thus often assumes a somewhat informed perspective on Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy, central terms are contextualized by means of supportive annotations and references to further reading.

1 Mabja's life and the historical setting of his ideas

1.1 Traces of a biography

Despite the deep influence of Mabja's Madhyamaka interpretation, even the most rudimentary bibliographical data remain nevertheless hard to determine. Part of the difficulty that we encounter is simply due to his name. Mabja, which is the Tibetan word for the peafowl, comes across as an unusual name or title for a person in Tibet,[1] yet around the time of our protagonist, the name is, according to a number of sources, also borne by another teacher of Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka, namely Mabja Jangchub Yeshe (Tib. *rMa bya byang chub ye shes*).[2] None of the works of this Jangchub Yeshe is available to us, but according to Gorampa[3] his Madhyamaka position differed from that of Jangchub Tsöndrü.[4] On the assumption that these were in fact two different individuals, the close resemblance of their names seems to have let to misidentifications, and one such prominent example has been discussed by Paul Williams in a pioneering article on Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü and his Madhyamaka stance.[5] To complicate matters further, one of Chapa's renowned "eight great lions" (Tib. *seng chen brgyad*) is referred to as Mabja Tsöpay Seng-ge (Tib. *rMa bya rTsod pa'i seng ge*) and, while some Tibetan sources identify this Tsöpay Seng-ge with Jangchub Tsöndrü,[6] it is not altogether clear that these are in fact two names of the same person.[7]

Despite these uncertainties, the emerging, general picture shows us that Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü was a student of Chapa who came into close and productive contact with the key exponents of Candrakīrti's newly translated texts.[8] In his chronicle, Shönnu Pal includes two passages on Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü. Appearing in the sections that describe, respectively, the *Dharma* transmission from Ngog Loden Sherab (Tib. *rNgog Blo ldan shes rab*)[9] and Patsab Nyima Drakpa, they read as follows:

> As for Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü, although he certainly possessed tremendous expertise in terms of scripture and reliable means of cognition, it was based on the Middle Way that he brought great benefit to others. He is the author of *ṭīkās* on the *Root Insight* (Skt. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*) and on the exposition found in the *Clear Words* (Skt. *Prasannapadā*),[10] a concise Middle Way compendium, and a *ṭīkā* on the *Logic Hammer* (Skt. *Tarkamudgara*).

> Rather than in the approach of the master Chapa, he had special faith in that of masters such as Jayānanda.[11]
>
> Among [Patsab's] disciples, Tsangpa Sarbö, Mabja Jangchub Yeshe, Dar Yöntan Drak, and Zhangthang Sagpa Yeshe Jungnay were known as the "four sons of Patsab," and through them the teaching of the Middle Way spread in Ü and Tsang. In particular,[12] Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü, Chapa's great lion, received both the Middle Way and the [*Secret*] *Gathering* (Skt. [*Guhya*]*samāja*) from Patsab, and having established bases for the *Dharma* throughout Yarlung, he taught the Middle Way for long. He had many disciples, such as Tsenthangwa Gyalwa Pal, and was responsible for a tremendous flourishing of the Middle Way.
>
> Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü was a disciple of both Khu lotsāwa Dodebar and of Jayānanda of Kashmir, and he also authored a *ṭīkā* on the latter's *Logic Hammer*. Among his works, I have myself seen his *ṭīkā* on the *Root Insight*, his *ṭīkā* on the exposition of the *Clear Words*,[13] his summary of and annotations to the *Commentary to Entering the Middle Way* (Skt. *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*), and his concise compendium on the Middle Way. It appears, however, that he produced several other works (Tib. *yig cha*) on the Middle Way as well.[14]

Among the texts mentioned here, "the ṭīkā on the *Root Insight*" (Tib. *rtsa ba'i shes rab kyi ṭīka*) must obviously refer to the *Ornament of Reason*, which until recently was also the only work of Mabja's still extant. As for the newly discovered *The Appearance of Reality* of which the "root verses" (Tib. *rtsa tshigs*) are translated in this book, this work consists of both the verses and an elaborating commentary, and, since the verses at times closely resemble Jayānanda's *Logic Hammer*, it could feasibly be the case that Shönnu Pal implies *The Appearance of Reality* when he mentions the "*ṭīka* on the *Logic Hammer*."[15] However, as reflected in its subtitle ("*Ornament to the Six Collections of Middle Way Reasoning*," Tib. *dbu ma rigs pa'i tshogs drug gyi rgyan*), the discussion in *The Appearance of Reality* spans much wider than the *Logic Hammer's* concerted attack on realist epistemology. It therefore seems somewhat unlikely that *The Appearance of Reality* would have become known to Shönnu Pal as a commentary on Jayānanda's treatise. Could it then be that *The Appearance of Reality* is the "*ṭīkā* on the exposition of the *Clear Words*" or the "compendium on the Middle Way" here mentioned by Shönnu Pal? Given that the text is cited by Gorampa, Śākya Chokden, and Mikyö Dorje (in the latter two cases as the sole source of Mabja's position), it would in any case be somewhat surprising if Shönnu Pal either did not know of it, or knew it but did not find it worthy of specific mention.

As we shall see,[16] Mabja in fact disqualifies an approach that sounds precisely like Chapa's from being genuine Madhyamaka, free from constructs (Skt. *niṣprapañca*, Tib. *spros bral*), and he denies that such an approach could bring about liberation from *saṃsāra*. Shönnu Pal's comment about Mabja being

comparatively less inspired by Chapa's approach may therefore seem somewhat like an understatement. On the other hand, his remark could also be seen as an acknowledgement of Mabja's continued reliance on, and consequent reformulation of, the *pramāṇa* framework that Mabja had learned and appropriated from Chapa.

As a general observation, Shönnu Pal clearly introduces us to a Jangchub Tsöndrü who is among the most influential transmitters of Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka interpretation and, while we know little of his reported disciple Tsenthangwa Gyalwa Pal, Mabja indeed appears in a number of historically important lineages, such as those reaching Rendawa (Tib. *Red mda' ba*, 1349–1412), Rongtön (Tib. *Rong ston*, 1367–1449), and Tsongkhapa.[17] In Chapter 3.2 we shall, as already mentioned, consider Mabja's considerable impact on Madhyamaka as taught in what became known as the "four schools" (Tib. *chos lugs bzhi*) of Buddhism in Tibet.

1.2 India and Tibet: a background of ideas

The sacred discourses on "transcendent insight" (Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*)[18] and their interpretation by Nāgārjuna in terms of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*, Tib. *stong pa nyid*) and dependent origination (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*, Tib. *rten 'brel*) meant the beginning of Madhyamaka philosophy in India and beyond. With time, Nāgārjuna's works of reasoning themselves became the object of diverse interpretations, and by the sixth century a certain program of reasoning and cognitive theory had thus also gained prominence in Mādhyamika[19] circles. Influenced by their Nyāya-Vaiṣesika adversaries, Buddhist epistemologists of India, such as Dignāga (sixth century), had been focusing on the issue of what constitutes reliable means of knowledge (Skt. *pramāṇa*). These Buddhist *pramāṇa* theorists[20] generally sought to achieve a method of argumentation that would vindicate their Buddhist stance based on a quite value-neutral and undogmatic point of departure. They hence taught that, when debating an issue, the subject under investigation must be something that is equally acknowledged by both of the debating parties, independently of their philosophical orientations,[21] and so mutually acknowledged as an unproblematic fact. Once settled upon, this minimal common ground would then be subjected to carefully negotiated rules of logic and argumentation. Finally, since the point of departure was assented to as fact, and since the rules of the game were similarly accepted as unobjectionably relevant, the ultimate outcome of the dispute would, it was felt, therefore also have to be commonly acknowledged as both definitive and binding.

The prolific Madhyamaka philosopher of the sixth century, Bhāviveka, felt that such *pramāṇa* rules of argumentation were a necessary component in the Madhyamaka arguments for emptiness. Unless it led to the explicit formulation of a proven point to which also the Mādhyamikas themselves would be committed,[22] a mere *reductio ad absurdum* (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*) of their realist opponent's position would, for Bhāviveka, be inconclusive and hence not constitute any genuine proof. In his *Lamp of Insight* (Skt. *Prajñāpradīpa*), a

commentary to Nāgārjuna's seminal *Root of the Middle Way*, Bhāviveka therefore charged an earlier commentator, Buddhapālita (sixth century), with incoherence and, ultimately, absurdity due to the latter's failing to construct a proper probative argument (Skt. *prayoga*, Tib. *sbyor ba*).[23] In his reliance on mere *reductio*, Buddhapālita had, according to Bhāviveka, not only failed to provide a clear proof of emptiness; because of his approach of purely negative critique he had in fact also ended up in an apparent denial of fundamentally important Buddhist principles, such as dependent origination.

To correct these perceived errors Bhāviveka took recourse to the notion of the two truths (Skt. *satyadvaya*, Tib. *bden pa gnyis*), or two levels of reality.[24] He argued that, while, to serve as a definitive proof, their argument would have to be constructed along the lines of *pramāṇa* theory, the Mādhyamikas's proven point – i.e. the universal emptiness of all *dharma*s (Tib. *chos*)[25] – would moreover have to be qualified as obtaining only "ultimately" (Skt. *paramārthatas*, Tib. *don dam par*). This would, according to Bhāviveka, accomplish the dual objective of being able to decisively show that phenomena really are empty of any nature of their own (Skt. *svabhāva*, Tib. *rang bzhin*), while at the same time affirming that, in merely conventional and relative *saṃvṛti*-terms,[26] the subject under investigation is manifest dependent origination.

This program of incorporating *pramāṇa* epistemology and its rules of argumentation into the Madhyamaka context became the object of Candrakīrti's sustained and insistent criticism.[27] In his own commentary to the *Root of the Middle Way*, the *Clear Words*, Candrakīrti takes issue with just about all of the central principles in Dignāga's epistemology,[28] and he ventures into an elaborate and explicit rebuttal of Bhāviveka's objections to Buddhapālita's commentarial work. Emphasizing the obscuring (Skt. *vṛ-*, Tib. *sgrib byed*) character of *saṃvṛti*, Candrakīrti sees the epistemological apparatus as futile at best, and for him only the perception of noble beings (Skt. *ārya*, Tib. *'phags pa*) in equipoise can be considered a genuinely reliable means of knowledge (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *tshad ma*).[29] Far from undermining the teaching of dependent origination, Buddhapālita's non-committal *reductio* approach is, according to Candrakīrti, in fact the only way to do justice to this principle, for the causes and effects that are known to the world (Skt. *lokaprasiddha*, Tib. *'jigs rten na 'grags pa*) can bear no analysis in terms of sameness or difference, permanence or impermanence, arising or ceasing, or any other of the fixtures of the thinking mind. The negation of such "extremes" (Skt. *koṭi*, Tib. *mtha'*) that have no bearing on the way things are is hence not only relevant ultimately, but in terms of conventional reality too. Any attempt at accounting for a metaphysics of conventional reality that goes beyond mere deference to the experience of "the world" (Skt. *loka*, Tib. *'jigs rten*) is therefore doomed to absurdity, because, when the apparent reality is investigated, nothing but emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*) will emerge.

Candrakīrti's critique seems, however, to have had little impact until very late in the history of Indian Madhyamaka thought.[30] Except for Prajñākaramati (950–1030), Jayānanda (twelfth century), and Atīśa (d. 1054), it appears that all of the subsequent Indian Mādhyamikas would endorse and develop the epistemological framework of the *pramāṇa* theorists without taking Candrakīrti's

critique into any substantial or explicit account. Instead, with the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka synthesis formulated in the works of Śāntarakṣita (725–88) and his disciple Kamalaśīla (eighth century), the integration of the *pramāṇa* tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti into the Madhyamaka context reached a form that was to have lasting influence on Indian philosophy as whole.[31] Both of these masters emphasize the necessity of a commonly accepted basis for debate, and they identify the dependently originating relative reality (Skt. *saṃvṛti*, Tib. *kun rdzob*) as the impermanent and causally efficient entities, which for Dignāga and Dharmakīrti are the perceptual substratum for conceptual abstractions. Relative reality is, as Śāntarakṣita specifies, thus more than a mere verbal convention (Tib. *sgra'i tha nyad tsam*),[32] and it is hence based on the "auto-established" (Tib. *rang gis grub pa*)[33] and perceptually accessible constituents of the relative reality that one may realize the ultimate truth of emptiness.

Both of these masters were as well instrumental in the establishment of the Buddhist religion in Tibet, and according to tradition their Mahāyāna approach was institutionalized by Tibetan imperial decree subsequent to Kamalaśīla's victory over a Chinese Chan teacher at a great debate held at Samyä (Tib. *bSam yas*) monastery.[34] Our few surviving indigenous Tibetan treatments of Madhyamaka dating from the so-called "early spread" (Tib. *snga dar*) of the Buddhist teachings[35] thus generally also treat the Yogacārā-Madhyamaka as the pinnacle of Madhyamaka thought, and they notably do not bring any reference to Candrakīrti.[36]

With the mid-ninth-century collapse of the Tibetan empire, Buddhist philosophical scholarship suffered serious setbacks, yet, by the opening of the eleventh-century, tradition speaks of a "later spread" (Tib. *phyi dar*) of the Dharma. This period is marked by the resumption of translation projects as Tibetans journey to India and Indians visit Tibet, and it likewise witnesses a strong emergence of an indigenous scholarly treatment of the translated scriptures. All of these elements are exemplified in the life of Ngog Loden Sherab (Tib. *rNgog Blo ldan shes rab*),[37] who with his efforts as a translator, editor, teacher, and philosopher in his own right was instrumental in the development of what has been termed "Tibetan scholasticism."[38] Ngog served as the abbot of Sangphu (Tib. *gSang phu*) monastery, and the surge of interest in *pramāṇa* theory that is characteristic of the eleventh century manifests itself in many ways with this monastic institution as its center.[39]

Mabja's reported teacher, Chapa Chökyi Seng-ge, was likewise an abbot of Sangphu monastery and, like Ngog, he regarded *pramāṇa* theory as a natural component of Madhyamaka thought. Seeing himself as a follower of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, Chapa brings the efforts to furnish the two-tiered Madhyamaka account of reality with a solid epistemic foundation into a new dimension. While Ngog taught that the ultimate truth transcends the mind, Chapa instead insists that it exists, indeed must exist, as the genuine object (Tib. *yul bden pa*) of veridical cognition if the Mādhyamika position is to be vindicated. This point he argues within a doctrine of substantial reality (Skt. *dravya*, Tib. *rdzas*) where, depending on the character of the evaluating *pramāṇa*, any subject under investigation may

be qualified as either relative or ultimate substance.[40] For Chapa, relative and ultimate *pramāṇas* thus capture equally relevant aspects of the very same object, and he can hence speak of a substance that is both ultimate and truly established (Tib. *bden grub*). Chapa's Madhyamaka interpretation, which in this regard can be seen as realist, rests on a strict application of the law of the excluded middle[41] and he hence displays little tolerance for the apparent paradoxes of Nagārjuna's reasoning. When Candrakīrti's sharp critique of the *pramāṇa*-theoretic enterprise and his largely non-committal account of conventional reality was introduced into Tibet, it therefore in Chapa's position encountered a confident and highly developed doctrine of unified Madhyamaka and *pramāṇa*-epistemology, which in this way displayed a markedly realist orientation.

If it had not done so in India,[42] Candrakīrti's critique of the methods and goals of the Madhyamaka enterprise was, however, to have a revolutionizing effect in Tibet. There, the issues that Candrakīrti raises fundamentally changed the parameters of Madhyamaka discourse. Yet, what exactly is it that Candrakīrti is out to accomplish with his critique of Bhāviveka and the *pramāṇa* theorists? On this issue Tibetan scholars and exegetes display a striking lack of consensus.[43] While potentially mind-boggling to the doxographer, their literature on this so-called "*Prāsaṅgika-*Svātantrika distinction" (Tib. *thal rang gi khyad par*) is also the locus of considerable philosophical wealth, for it is often precisely in terms of explaining what it is that separates the Candrakīrtian, "Consequentialist" (Skt. **prāsaṅgika*, Tib. *thal 'gyur ba*), from the "Autonomist" (Skt. **svātantrika*, Tib. *rang rgyud pa*) – as the Mādhyamikas associated with Bhāviveka and the traditional *pramāṇa* theorists became known[44] – that Tibetan Mādhyamikas have delivered the key elements of their own thought. Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü is in this regard no exception, and his comprehensive Madhyamaka program can hence be located within this exegetical context. In particular, what Mabja attempts is the large-scale import of the *pramāṇa* theorists' epistemological apparatus, specifically as developed by Chapa, into the context of Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka.[45] The result is a program of re- and trans-formed *pramāṇa* thought that emerges within a sustained attack on the very conditions for the possibility of knowledge. Having here briefly considered the issues that provide the backdrop, let us now turn to the teaching of our protagonist.

Notes

1 The Tibetan chronicles and lineage accounts do speak of a few individuals bearing this name, but it is unclear why they received it and whether it is indicative of any particular connection between them – such as family line, or a religious or geographic relation (one area of Tsang (Tib. *gTsang*) in central Tibet is in fact known as Mabja (Tib. *rMa bya*)). Apart from Jangchub Tsöndrü and Jangchub Yeshe, to whom we shall turn below, Shönnu Pal also refers to Mabja Narawa (Tib. *rMa bya rNa ra ba*, 1060–1129), an abbot of Solnak Thenpoche (Tib. *Sol nag Than po che*), and Mabja Josay (Tib. *rMa bya Jo sras*), a disciple of Gö Khugpa Lhetsay (Tib. *'Gos khug pa lhas brtsas*). A number of sources (see Jackson 1983, 25–26 and 30 n. 33) further specify that Mabja Śākya Seng-ge (Tib. *Śākya seng ge*), a disciple of Tsur Zhönnu Seng-ge (Tib. *mTshur gZhon nu seng ge*), who was himself a student of Jangchub Tsöndrü, was a link in the

Madhyamaka transmission received by masters such as Rendawa (Tib. *Red mda' ba*, 1349–1412), Rongtön (Tib. *Rong ston*, 1367–1449), and Tsongkhapa.

2 See below, n. 8.

3 *Light Rays of the Authentic View* 14b:

> *gsum pa ni de ltar dam bca' bzhi ston na rtsod bzlog las dbu ma pa la dam bca' med par gsungs pa dang 'gal lo snyam na / 'di'i lan la / pa los / dam bca' med par gsungs pa ni yongs gcod sgrub pa'i dam bca' med pa yin gyi / rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam yang med pa ma yin pas / mi 'gal lo ces dang / byang ye rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' yang pha rol gyi log rtog dgag par 'dod nas de'i ngor byas pa yin gyi dbu ma pa rang la dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam yang med do zhes pa dang / byang brtson gyis / don dam par dgag sgrub kyi dam bca' gang yang med la / kun rdzob tsam du 'dir skabs su bab pa rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam dang / spyir yongs gcod sgrub pa'i dam bca' yang yod pa mi 'gal lo zhes pa'i smra ba gsum snang ba las.*

Gorampa here accurately describes Jangchub Tsöndrü's position, and his account of Patsab's is in accord with what we see in Rongtön's *Explanation of the Root of the Middle Way* (p. 24; translation in Ruegg 2000, 160 n. 72). For these reasons Williams 1985 (210–11) concludes that all three views ought to be identified as in Gorampa's text. However, since Gorampa's *Mūlamadhyamaka*-commentary for the most part consists of inexplicit yet *verbatim* citations from Jangchub Tsöndrü's *Ornament of Reason* (see Chapter 3.2.3), the fact that it accurately describes the latter's position does not in itself allow us to deduce anything with respect to the ascription of the two other views. Moreover, the position that Gorampa indentifies as that of "Palo" (Tib. *Pa lo*) is refuted in a recently discovered text ascribed to Patsab (*The Illuminating Lamp*, 49a):

> *khyed yongs gcod gyi sbgrub bya mi 'dod kyang / rnam bcad dgag pa tsam gyi sgrub bya 'dod dgos pas de sgrub pa'i gtan tshigs la tshogs pa mkhas len dgos so zhe na / nged la dgag pa tsam gyi sgrub bya'ang 'dod pa med de / dgag bya'i rang bzhin ma grubs pas na bkag pa yang mi 'thad ste / 'phags pa nyid kyis /* [illegible word] *ni dgag pa byed do zhe / bya byed de ni khyod kyis bskur / ces gungs pas dgag pa tsam yang mi 'dod do //.*

On this text and its attribution to Patsab, see Chapter 3.1.1.

4 See Williams 1985 and Ruegg 2000, 163–66 and 190–93.

5 See Williams 1985, which studies Jamyang Shepay Dorje's ascription of two conflicting views to Jangchub Tsöndrü. See also the response to Williams in Ruegg 2000, 193 n. 131.

6 Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa (Tib. *dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba*) does so explicitly (Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 105), and Shönnu Pal appears to make the same point by, first, mentioning Mabja Tsöpay Seng-ge in the enumeration of Chapa's eight lions (*Blue Annals*, 405), and subsequently, in one of two sections devoted to Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü, stating that the latter was one of these eight (see p. 2).

7 Cf. below, n. 8.

8 Śākya Chokden (*The Origins of the Middle Way*, 233–34), Karmapa Mikyö Dorje (*Chariot of Accomplished Ones*, 243), Longdol Ngag-wang Losang (Tib. *Klong rdol Ngag dbang blo bzang*, 1719–94. See Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 99), and Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye (Tib. *Kong sprul Blo 'gros mtha' yas*, 1813–99. See Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 99) all state that Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü was among the "four sons" (Tib. *bu bzhi*) of Patsab, whereas Shönnu Pal (*Blue Annals*, 417) and Pema Karpo (Tib. *Padma dkar po*, 1527–92. See Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 105) instead ascribe this postion to Mabja Jangchub Yeshe. The latter two sources nevertheless both treat Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü as an important disciple of Patsab (see p. 2 and Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 105), and it cannot be excluded that Shönnu Pal in fact considered Jangchub Yeshe and Jangchub Tsöndrü to be identical. Pema Karpo, however, mentions that Jangchub

Yeshe was the paternal uncle of Jangchub Tsöndrü (Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 105), and in Tsongkhapa's and Khedrub Jay's (Tib. *Mkhas grub rje*, 1385–1438) "inventories of received teachings" (Tib. *gsan yig*), Jangchub Tsöndrü appears as a disciple of Jangchub Yeshe in the Madhyamaka transmission coming from Tsongkhapa (Jackson 1983, 30–31 n. 33 and Ruegg 2000, 88–89 n. 192). Nyang-ral Nyimay Ozer (Tib. *Nyang ral nyi ma'i 'od zer*, 1136–1204) describes the transmission from Patsab to Jangchub Tsöndrü as passing through Darma Yönten Drak (Tib. *Dar ma Yon tan grags*) and Phabongkhaba (Tib. *Pha bong kha ba*) (see Ruegg 2000, 51 n. 105). According to Shönnu Pal, Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü was as well a direct disciple of Jayānanda and Khu Dodebar (Tib. *Khu mDo sde 'bar*) (see p. 7).

9 On Ngog's life and oeuvre, see Kramer 2007 and Hugon 2008a, 18–34. On Ngogs's Madhyamaka and *tathāgatagarbha* interpretation, see Ruegg 2000, 26–34, Mathes 2008, 25–32, and Kano 2009.

10 Tib. *tshig gsal stong thun*. Yoshimizu (1996, 6–10) suggests that this phrase refers specifically to the introductory section of the *Clear Words*, which in a tremendous elaboration on Nāgārjuna's initial verses treats a number of key issues of Madhyamaka view and method. On the term *stong thun* (here translated as, "exposition") in general, see also Ruegg 2000, 52 n. 107.

11 Shönnu Pal, *Blue Annals*, 406:

> *rma bya byang chub brtson 'grus ni / lung dang tshad ma la yang shin tu mkhas mod kyi / de dbu ma la brten nas gzhan phan mang du mdzad cing / rtsa ba'i shes rab dang tshig gsal stong thun gyi ṭīka / dbu ma'i bsdus pa dang / rtog ge tho ba'i ṭīka'ang mdzad de / 'di yang slop dpon phywa ba'i lugs las / dza ya ānanda la sogs pa'i lugs la lhag par dad par mdzad /.*

12 This phrasing, combined with the fact that Shönnu Pal continues to account for the life and work of Zhangthang Sagpa only after his treatment of Jangchub Tsöndrü, seems to leave open the possibility that Shönnu Pal considered Jangchub Tsöndrü and Jangchub Yeshe to be the same person (cf. Williams 1985, 214–15). The *Blue Annals* does not contain any specific account of the lives of Tsangpa Sarbö, Mabja Jangchub Yeshe, or Dar Yönten Drak. On Zhangthang Sagpa and his Madhyamaka interpretation, see Yoshimizu 2005, 2009a, and 2009b.

13 See above, n. 10.

14 *Blue Annals*, 417:

> *slob ma rnams kyi nang nas gtsang pa sar sbos / rma bya byang chub ye shes / dar yon tan grags / zhang thang sag pa ye shes 'byung gnas rnams la spa tshab kyi bu bzhi zhes grags / de rnams la brten nas dbus gtsang du dbu ma'i bshad pa dang / bye brag tu slob dpon phywa pa'i seng chen rma bya byang brtson gyis spa tshab la dbu ma dang 'dus pa gnyis ka gsan te / yar klungs kyi stod smad du chos gzhi spos zhing dbu ma'i bshad pa yun ring du mdzad / btsan thang ba rgyal ba dpal la sogs pa'i slob ma mang po byung zhing dbu ma shin tu dar bar mdzad / rma bya byang chub brtson 'grus ni khu lo tsa' ba mdo sde 'bar dang / kha che dza ya ānanda gnyis ka'i slob ma ste / dza ya ānandas mdzad pa'i rtog ge tho ba la yang ṭīka mdzad / rtsa ba'i shes rab kyi ṭīka / tshigs gsal gyi stong thun gyi ṭīka / 'jug 'grel gyi bsdus don dang mchan / dbu ma'i bsdus pa mrdzad pa rnams ni mthong / gzhan yang dbu ma'i skor la yig cha mang du mdzad pa 'dra'o /.*

15 In *Ornament of Reason* (p. 41) Mabja once refers the reader to his "*Establishing the Essential Reality of the Middle Way* (Tib. *dbu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*)" and Williams (1985, 207) has suggested that the latter text is identical with the work Mikyö Dorje knows as the *Rigs rgyan snang ba*. Hence he proposes that, "Byang brtson's *Tarkamudgaraṭīkā* was in fact called the *Rigs rgyan snang ba*, subtitled, *dbu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*." Subsequent to the emergence of the *The Appearance of Reality* there can no longer be any doubt that the text Mabja refers to

is indeed the latter. We may also conclude that, while *Establishing the Essential Reality of the Middle Way* (Tib. *dbu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*) is a descriptive reference and not the actual subtitle (as Williams otherwise surmised), the text that Mikyö Dorje refers to and quotes from is also *The Appearance of Reality*. As I next argue, there are nevertheless reasons to believe that the *tīka* to the *Logic Hammer* mentioned by Shönnu Pal constitutes a separate text. For Mikyö Dorje's reference to the *Rigs rgyan snang ba*, see p. 83.

16 P. 23 and Chapter 3.1.3.

17 Ngawang Losang Gyatso's *List of Received Teaching*: vol. 1, 233ff; Śākya Chokden's *The Origins of the Middle Way*: 233–34. Noted and described in Jackson 1983, 25–26 and 30 n. 33.

18 The *prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*s are of foundational importance to Mahāyāna Buddhism, which ascribes them a canonical status. The earliest extant manuscript dates from the first century CE (see Skilling 2013).

19 I here follow the apparently modern convention (see Tillemans 2001) of using *Madhyamaka* for the view and *Mādhyamika* for its proponents.

20 For an introduction to the Indian Buddhist theories of "reliable means of cognition" (Skt. *pramāṇa*) associated with Dignāga and the latter's interpretor, Dharmakīrti, see Dreyfus 1997, 15–21; Tillemans 1999, 1–18; and Dunne 2004, 15–52.

21 To use an example much applied in Tibet, such a subject might for instance be *sound*, in the simple sense of being just that which is audible, and so not qualified as either permanent (as held by the Mīmāṃsakas) or impermanent (as the Buddhists would have it). On the issue of the so-called "concordantly appearing subject" (Tib. *chos can mthun snang ba*) in Tibetan Madhyamaka thought, see Tillemans and Lopez 1999.

22 I.e. the so-called "reversal of the consequence" (Skt. *prasaṅgaviparyaya*, Tib. *thal bzlog*). On the significance of this principle in the Madhyamaka context, see Tillemans 1992.

23 On the character of Bhāviveka's objections, see Ruegg 1981, 61 and 64–66; Tillemans 1992; and Ames 2003.

24 In the Buddhist context, the Sanskrit *satya* and Tibetan *bden pa* refer not only to truth bearers, i.e. statements and propositions, but also to things and states of affairs. Therefore, while in English translation *satyadvaya* can be rendered as "two truths," it must be borne in mind that the implication is often two distinct modes of reality. The term "ultimate truth" (Skt. *paramārtha*, Tib. *don dam*) may in this way refer to definitively true statements, just as it may imply something that is real in the final analysis, or from an ultimate perspective. Likewise, what I here translate as either "relative" or "conventional truth," i.e. the Sanskrit *saṃvṛtisatya* and Tibetan *kun rdzob bden pa*, may imply a statement that features some relevance but cannot taken at face value. Yet it may also indicate a thing or condition that is merely of an apparent reality, and that therefore does not obtain ultimately. For a discussion of the origin and connotations of these terms, see Newland and Tillemans 2010.

25 In the *śrāvaka* (i.e. non-Mahāyāna) schools of Buddhist philosophy a *dharma* is an irreducible, phenomenological principle. The metaphysics of the śrāvaka Abhidharma are hence concerned with determining the categories of *dharmas* and establishing the relationships between them, so that this knowledge may be exploited in the pursuit of liberation from *saṃsāra*. Mahāyāna philosophy tends to incorporate, reform, and expand on the *śrāvaka* Abhidharma, subjecting it to overarching hermeneutical principles such as the three natures (Skt. *trisvabhāva*, Tib. *ngo bo nyid gsum*, see p. 37 n. 10) or the two truths (Skt. *satyadvaya*, Tib. *bden pa gnyis*, see above n. 24). See, e.g., Arnold 2006, 17–22.

26 See above n. 24.

27 On the character of Candrakīrti's critique, see, e.g., the descriptions and discussions in Ruegg 1981 (71 and 74–80) and 2000; Tillemans 1990 (37–66); 1992, and 2003; and Arnold 2006 (143–74).

28 Candrakīrti thus rejects the *pramāṇa* theorists' identification of the epistemic means (which for the latter are exclusively perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*, Tib. *mngon sum*) and inference (Skt. *anumāna*, Tib. *rjes dpag*)), and the objects to which these means relate (i.e. real particulars (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*) and constructed universals (Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *spyi mtshan*)), as well as the certainty (Skt. *niścaya*, Tib. *nges pa*) that is held to result from the proper use of inference in relation to the perceptual reality. See the references mentioned on p. 14 n. 20.
29 Cf. *Entering the Middle Way*, VI. 23ff.
30 See Vose 2009b, 17–39.
31 On the *pramāṇa*-theoretic Madhyamaka project of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, see, e.g., Ruegg 1981, 98–100, McClintock 2003, 2010, Tillemans 2003, Keira 2004, Blumenthal 2004, Mipham 2004, and Coseru 2012.
32 *Commentary on the Ornament of the Middle Way*: 70b–71a:

> *kun rdzob ni sgra'i tha snyad tsam gyi bdag nyid ma yin gyi / mthong ba dang 'dod pa'i dngos po rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba rnams ni brtag mi bzod pas yang dag pa'i kun rdzob ste* /.

33 Cf. ibid 78b–79a.
34 Both Tibetan and Chinese accounts of such a debate exist, yet only Tibetan sources describe Kamalaśīla as the victor. See Demiéville 1951.
35 So labelled by Tibetan tradition, this period, characterized by imperial patronage and propagation of Buddhism, can be seen as coming to an end with the collapse of the Tibetan empire around 842. On the periods known by tradition as the "early and later spreads" (Tib. *sngar dar phyi dar*) of the Buddhist teachings, see Kapstein 2000. For a study and critique of the traditional notions of two such periods separated by an "age of fragmentation" (Tib. *sil bu'i dus*), see Dalton 2011.
36 See Ruegg 2000, 23–25.
37 See p. 13 n. 9.
38 Cf. Kapstein 2001, 89.
39 On Sangphu and its significance for the development of Buddhist epistemology in Tibet, see van der Kuijp 1993.
40 The features of Chapa's Madhyamaka will be considered in detail in Chapter 3.1.3.
41 See below, p. 57.
42 See Vose 2009b, 17–39.
43 Incisive treatments of a number of influential interpretations can be found in Dreyfus and McClintock 2003.
44 While the terms *thal 'gyur ba* and *rang rgyud pa* are quite ubiquitous in Tibetan Madhyamaka doxographies from the fourteenth century onwards, we have so far no example of their use in a Sanskrit text. Jayānanda's commentary to Candrakīrti's *Entering the Middle Way* separates the *rang rgyud pa* from Candrakīrti's interpretion without labeling the latter *thal 'gyur ba* (see Mimaki 1982, 53 and Vose 2009b, 36 and 188 n. 119), yet this commentary is extant only in Tibetan and it may have been written in Tibet. The *Illuminating Lamp*, which is attributed to the translator of Candrakīrti's texts, Patsab Nyima Drakpa (see Section 3.1.1), uses both appelations throughout, and the terms may indeed have been created by Patsab. Tibetan scholars such as Butön Rinchen Drub (Tib. *Bu ston rin chen grub*, 1290–1364) have seen the terms as essentially Tibetan constructs, and in his work on the *Blo gsal grub mtha'* Mimaki similarly suggests (Mimaki 1982, 53): "Tous les termes utiles pour classer les sous-écoles des Mādhyamika, tels que Sautrāntika-mādhyamika, Yogācāra-mādhyamika, 'Jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa, Svātantrika et Prāsaṅgika sont une invention des auteurs tibétains." Alternatively, *Prāsaṅgika* and *Svātantrika* may have been current in eleventh-century Kashmir and subsequently introduced by Patsab upon his return to Tibet (see Section 3.1.1 and Dreyfus 2010).
45 Cf. Vose 2009b, 8–9.

2 Mabja's Madhyamaka

2.1 Two truths and the means for knowing them

2.1.1 The three Dharmacakras *in Mabja's hermeneutics*

Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü is a Mādhyamika who concurs with Candrakīrti that liberation may only be gained through the path shown by Ārya Nāgārjuna. For Mabja, this achievement depends on being able to non-implicatively negate (Skt. *prasajyapratiṣedha*, Tib. *med par dgag pa*)[1] all mental constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*), and so the Middle Way is discovered through a universal dismissal of both positive and negative phenomena (Skt. *vidhi/pratiṣedha*, Tib. *sgrub pa/dgag pa*).[2] It is only through this realization of a complete absence of mental constructs (Skt. *niṣprapañca*, Tib. *spros bral*) that the liberation of a *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha*, or *bodhisattva* can be won.[3] Whether the mind holds on to crude entities of self and other, whether it believes in non-dual cognition, or whether it adheres to emptiness itself, all such grasping is, in the end, detrimental to the pursuit of liberation,[4] and Mabja thus sees the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras* and Nāgārjuna's "collections of reasoning" (Tib. *rigs tshogs*) as the culmination of the Buddha Dharma.

On Mabja's interpretation it is, however, not only the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature that expresses the definitive meaning (Skt. *nītārtha*).[5] The third and final *dharmacakra*[6] reveals as well the intent of the Buddha directly, for these texts resolve the apparent conflict between the declaration of existent but personless *dharmas* in the initial *dharmacakra* on the four truths of the *āryas* (Tib. *bka' dang po bden pa bzhi'i chos 'khor*) and the subsequent denial of the same in the *Prajñāpāramitā*.[7] It is, Mabja explains, in relation to this third *dharmacakra* that the Cittamātra and Madhyamaka commentarial traditions emerge.[8] Whereas Cittamātra seeks to achieve the necessary reconciliation between the first two *dharmacakras* by interpreting the Prajñāpāramitā's declaration of the non-existence of all *dharmas*[9] as pertaining only to what is of imaginary nature (Skt. *parikalpita*, Tib. *kun brtags*),[10] "the expert followers of noble Nāgārjuna" (Tib. *'phags pa klu sgrub kyi rjes su 'brang pa 'i mkhas pa rnams*) employ, according to Mabja, scripture and reasoning to explain the intent of the sūtras without any error. Thus the Mādhyamikas understand that, while the initial *dharmacakra* considers "the relative, deluded perspective" (Tib. *kun rdzob 'khrul pa'i ngo*), the

Prajñāpāramitā's universal negation of all dharmas is made "in accordance with the ultimate, rational perspective that is free from delusion" (Tib. *don dam pa rigs pa'i shes pa ma 'khrul pa'i ngor*).[11]

2.1.2 Two truths based on the present appearance

The Madhyamaka paradigm of two truths, one relative (Skt. *saṃvṛti*, Tib. *kun rdzob*) and the other ultimate (Skt. *paramārtha*, Tib. *don dam*), is, then, for Mabja, entirely mind-dependent. Just as the same thing may be classified as either long or short depending on our point of reference, the truth is twofold simply because whatever appears to us can be related to by either a mind that suffers from delusion or one that is free from distorting influences. Both truths are thus distinguished based on "precisely that which appears" (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po 'di nyid*):

> In terms of their essence, these two truths are not different, as it would be the case with a vase and a blanket, because they are both posited on the basis of precisely the very essence that appears, just as it appears. How are we then, on this very basis, to speak of two truths? Depending on the context, a single entity may be classified as either long or short, or as a preceding cause or a subsequent effect. Similarly, although there is no essential difference, we speak in terms of two truths in relation to two mental perspectives. Thus, that which we classify as the essence that is cognized in terms of the relative is precisely the presently appearing entity, just as it is encountered and established from the perspective of a conventional mind in delusion. What we classify as the essence of the ultimate is that very same entity, just as it is encountered and established from the perspective of the noble one's wakefulness free from delusion, or from the perspective of rational cognition.[12]

That something *does* appear is, as we shall see, for Mabja nevertheless simply the result of delusion, and hence ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*, Tib. *ma rig pa*) and appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) are coextensive in the sense that the former is the cause of the latter.[13] This thoroughly delusory character of all that appears notwithstanding, there is, Mabja appears to explain, on the other hand no ultimate truth to be discovered outside and beyond the contents of experience:

> All that appears is unestablished, both from the perspective of the non-conceptual wakefulness of a noble one's equipoise, as well as from the viewpoint of a consciousness that has employed reason to analyze and investigate. The appearances themselves are neither existent nor non-existent, neither true nor false. They entirely lack any essential establishment, such as being an object of cognition, expression, or evaluation. They are, hence, beyond all conceptual constructs. The conventional term "ultimate truth" is applied in consideration of this alone.[14]

For Mabja, any mention of things such as defining characteristics (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*, Tib. *mtshan nyid*), *definienda* (Skt. *lakṣya*, Tib. *mtshon bya*), and bearers of characteristics (Tib. *mtshan gzhi*) in the context of the ultimate is simply meant as a corrective against the mind's tendency to construct such features of an ultimate reality. Thus one sets forth a defining characteristic of ultimate reality precisely because it is necessary to show that there could not be any:

> If such things as defining characteristics were not taught by way of superimposition, it would not be understood that defining characteristics etc. have no bearing on the ultimate truth. And unless that is realized, it will not be possible to achieve liberation from the attachments to an ultimate truth that has defining characteristics etc. Therefore, so that those who wish for liberation may gain such realization, it is, conventionally, necessary to teach through the superimposition of things such as defining characteristics.[15]

2.1.3 The denial of particular characteristics

Once this complete absence of anything ultimate has been acknowledged, it will, Mabja explains, as well be seen that whatever appears is not *even conventionally* related to any fact of the matter at all. Preceding Tsongkhapa by more than two centuries, Mabja repeatedly draws a distinction that will provide the framework for the perhaps most elaborate debate in the history of Tibetan Madhyamaka.[16] Here is an example:

> Arising, cessation, and so forth are like dreams and illusions. They are merely apparent from the perspective of the deluded mind. Particular characteristics, such as those that the Middle Way Autonomists believe in, do not even exist in terms of the relative.[17]

What distinguishes the flawless Madhyamaka from the Svātantrika approach (contrary to the Patsab-attributed *Illuminating Lamp*, Mabja does not use the term *thal 'gyur ba* in juxtaposition with *rang rgyud pa*, but speaks instead of *dbu chen*, "the Great Madhyamaka," or simply *chos 'di*, "this teaching") is the fact that the latter buys into that reification of phenomena, which is the shared tendency of all deluded beings. Although Svātantrikas restrict the relevance of "particular characteristics" (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang gi mtshan nyid*)[18] to conventional reality, they thereby reveal their unacknowledged, subtly realist (Tib. *dngos por smra ba*) ontology, which, as we shall see below, goes hand in hand with an immature expectation of perfect epistemological certainty. On Mabja's analysis, acceptance of conventional particular characteristics amounts to acceptance of a relative truth that resists ultimate analysis and, hence, absurdly, turns out not to be empty.[19] In the *The Appearance of Reality*, Mabja lets a Svātantrika defend their position as follows:

> Indeed, as they cannot be found upon examination by means of rational cognition, there are no ultimately real entities. Hence we do not say either

> that "things are ultimately real!" Our position is merely that, while double moons, etc. are not even real entities in terms of the relative, a single moon, etc. is, at the level of the relative, a real thing by virtue of its particular characteristics. The latter sort of thing will not be invalidated on account of not being observed by rational cognition, because such things are not the objects of rational cognition. Speech is, similarly, not invalidated by virtue of not being observed by a visual cognition.[20]

The Svātantrika believes that he has fully acknowledged the Madhyamaka critique of real existents, for he accepts that no thing can have ultimate reality. Yet it is, for him, just as obvious that, as a follower of Nāgārjuna, one must differentiate between what is correct and incorrect conventionally based on the presence or absence of relative substance. The Madhyamaka arguments therefore target only entities that are held to feature ultimate reality. If we are to duly appreciate the two truths of the Middle Way, we must, he tells us, recognize both ultimate emptiness and the relative existence of an objectively established world. Negating the latter on account of the former would be similar to rejecting the existence of sound because of its not being perceptible to the eyes. What we want, in other words, is equal recognition of the two truths, not some prejudiced favoring of one particular cognitive perspective.

This seemingly prudent assertion of relative, particular characteristics is, Mabja argues, nevertheless far from innocent, and in fact antithetical to both the Madhyamaka philosophical enterprise and the pursuit of liberation. Mabja therefore retorts:

> Suppose that our failing to find them by means of rational cognition would then not be sufficient to invalidate relative reality in the form of particularly characterized entities. This would also mean that our failing to find them when we are awake would not be sufficient to refute that what we experience during dreams are particularly characterized entities, because dream-experience is, similarly, not the object of the waking consciousness. Such a consequence can, however, not be accepted, because it would turn any object into a true entity, and all apprehending minds would end up free from delusion.[21]

The opponent wanted to restrict the scope of Madhyamaka negation, and so created hedges whereby the refutations are qualified to only apply to ultimate reality (Tib. *dgag bya la don dam gyi khyad par sbyar ba*). Yet what he achieves is not secure epistemic grounds for distinguishing between real and unreal relative phenomena. Contrary to such Svātantrika wishes and expectations, he ends up, Mabja argues, forced to accept objects that are clearly illusory, such as those that we seem to encounter in dreams, as being perfectly real. Likewise, given that its object is real, the mind that apprehends such illusions will have to be veridical. This quite paradoxical consequence follows because all hedging against the Madhyamaka critique can be done only along lines that are entirely arbitrary.[22] We

may for some reason (its being perceptible, efficacious, undeniable, etc. – the list can include any given reason) decide that the vase before us is only refutable ultimately, and hence objectively real as a relative entity. Yet what, Mabja's argument goes, is then to prevent someone from convincing us that the horned donkey and furry turtle, which we may have dreamt of encountering, are unreal only in the sense that they cannot be found in the world we experience when awake, and that despite this specific lack of establishment, they are still undeniably real and to be reckoned with as inhabitants of the world of dream? If the present experience of the vase is sufficient grounds for ascribing to it a particular, restricted level of undeniable reality, then why would not the same have to follow in the case of that which appears to us in dreams, optical illusions, etc.? What the Svātantrika presented as sound Madhyamaka metaphysics and epistemology, properly safeguarded against nihilist pitfall, turns out to be realism with a vengeance. As they end up allowing that anything can be real in *some* sense, the Svātantrikas have denied themselves the very possibility of absence and nothing. On Mabja's argument, hedging in terms of conventional/ultimate reality does not bring secure epistemological foundations but opens up the floodgates for the irrational.

2.1.4 What then is "relative reality"?

Now the very term *saṃvṛtisatya* implies, after all, some sort of truth and reality. How would then Mabja himself, the Svātantrika may enquire, explain the kind of *satya* that pertains to *saṃvṛti*, if he rejects any appeal to distinct cognitive perspectives as the warrants of distinct modes of reality? Mabja's position on this issue can perhaps be characterized in terms of the notion of qualitatively distinct cognitive perspectives, yet a denial of the conclusion that such cognitive plurality must have ontological consequences. Ultimate reasoning shows the experience of "relative reality" to be completely devoid of factual underpinnings, yet without thereby refuting that this mere appearance (Tib. *snang tsam*) of dependent origination is there from the preanalytic perspective. Understanding this is simply a matter of acknowledging distinct perspectives and by no means a warrant for the construction of ontology. Mabja concludes:

> Upon analysis there is indeed no origination in terms of particular characteristics. Yet the relative is not posited from the perspective of reasoning. It is posited, however, without analysis from the perspective of the world, as a mere appearance of dependent origination.[23]

In the epistemological context, the Tibetan word *snang ba* may refer to "appearance," *qua* that which appears to the mind, as well as to the subjective "experience" of the percept. In the same context, it can as well be used to denote a sense of cognitive illumination that can neither be described as particularly objective or subjective. Finally, as a common verb, *snang ba* can also simply mean to appear in the sense of "coming across" and "seeming to be the case." This general ambiguity of the word *snang ba* permits two somewhat different

accounts of *saṃvṛti* in Mabja's works. On the one hand, conventional reality is simply *whatever appears to be the case* from the perspective of deluded consciousness. In this way Mabja suggests expanding the inventory of the relative reality to include also "permanent things" (Tib. *rtag pa'i dngos po*), for, while permanent and impermanent entities are in reality equally void, they are as well to the same extent apparent from the perspective of a mind that has not undertaken any Madhyamaka enquiry.[24] Mabja thus here appears happy to endorse, as conventionally relevant, even such for *pramāṇa* theory anathematic notions as permanent entities, simply because "they seem to be there." *That which appears*, i.e. the object of perceptual cognition, is on the other hand for Mabja to be classified as *svabhāva*-less, dependent origination. Mabja explains:

> The mind of confined perception sees this outer and inner dependent origination that is without particular characteristics. [Based on that,] it conceives of the objects that are established to the unimpaired six faculties as if they were entities of particular characteristics, and it likewise believes the [perceiving] subject to be free from delusion.[25]

In this striking example of his almost pirating appropriation of the *pramāṇa*-theoretical apparatus[26] in his declared Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka interpretation, Mabja wishes to reserve a peculiar Madhyamaka version of epistemological accuracy to non-conceptual perception. On Mabja's account, the sense consciousnesses of ordinary beings in fact see and experience illusory-dependent origination, free from particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*) and it is only by subjecting this, from the Madhyamaka perspective, near-perfect epistemic situation to conceptual construction that the mind really errs against the abiding way of its object (Tib. *shes bya'i gnas lu*gs). Rather than acknowledging an otherwise evident absence of any nature (Skt. *svabhāva*, Tib. *rang bzhin*) of the content of experience,[27] the mind instead proceeds to superimpose the notion of particular characteristics so forcefully that it ends up getting the impression that such objective facts are actually accessible to it.

This description of an empirical encounter with emptiness *qua* appearance devoid of nature (Skt. *svabhāva*, Tib. *rang bzhin*) is, however, as Mabja elsewhere wishes to stress, only required from the perspective of immature minds, because, when the experienced adept acknowledges the intrinsic nature (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*) through meditative composure, all such elaboration is transcended.[28]

Nevertheless, when formulating one's account of the conventional reality it is, for Mabja, necessary to adopt a view that sees sense cognition as accurate, whereas thought is errant and in need of correction. What the senses perceive is dependent origination, free from the extremes of mental construction, an implicative negation (Skt. *paryudāsa*, Tib. *ma yin dgag*)[29] that constitutes the way things are in *saṃvṛti* terms. The conceptual mind misinterprets this experience and so constructs particular characteristics.

In his distinction between the "authentic" (Skt. *tathya*, Tib. *yang dag pa*) and "mistaken" (Skt. *mithyā*, Tib. *log pa*) relative truth,[30] Mabja further formalizes his

privileging of the senses as sources of knowledge. In yet another example of his characteristically idiosyncratic combination of Dharmakīrti and Candrakīrti, Mabja here sees *Entering the Middle Way* as drawing a distinction between perceptual entities of matter and mind, as opposed to non-conceptual distortions (the appearance of a double moon, for example) and the abstractions (Skt. **arthasāmānya*, Tib. *don spyi*) that are the contents of conceptual thought.[31] The former category can, from the perspective of the world, be said to capture things as they are, whereas the latter consists of misrepresentation.[32] In conclusion he states:

> Therefore, the mind that involves appearance may be divided in terms of the presence and absence of delusion, while its objects may be classified as either true or false. Yet, since these divisions are known among worldly, childish, ordinary individuals, they belong to the relative truth of such individuals.[33]

Mabja's Madhyamaka considers, we may conclude, any unequivocal ontological classification of the apparent reality a severe error and, while epistemologically he privileges the experience of the senses, even the perception of appearance as such is in the end but a delusion that is to be overcome through sustained cultivation of the path. Nevertheless, as we shall next see, Mabja's approach is far from quietist about the relative truth.

2.1.5 Does a Mādhyamika make assertions?

While indeed the Madhyamaka could not hold any ultimate view, it is, for Mabja, just as obvious that in accepting this ultimate absence of any position, the Madhyamaka is necessarily committed to the conventional truth of the proposition whereby this absence is expressed. Responding to those who take Nāgārjuna to be saying that, as a Madhyamaka, one does not have any view of one's own,[34] Mabja enquires:

> *Then, since self and other are mutually dependent,*
> *If there is no position of one's own there is no position of others either.*
> *What, then, is it that you wear yourself out refuting*?[35]

Given the interdependent nature of such notions, the very idea of "extreme positions," "positions of others" etc. necessarily involves their opposites. Hence, if there is a wrong view there is also a right view. Therefore:

> *Free from the extremes of existence and non-existence, permanence and annihilation,*
> *The path of the Middle Way is dependent origination.*
> *Why would one not accept this in terms of the merely relative?*[36]

Indeed, conventionally the teaching of the Madhyamaka is dependent origination, free from constructs (Skt. *prapañca*), just as shown in the opening praises of the *Root of the Middle Way*.[37] Hence, as there is a view of the Madhyamaka, understanding and developing this view will, Mabja insists, require reliable means of cognition. Yet such cognitive means must carry just as little metaphysical baggage as the appearance of dependent origination to which they are applied.

2.1.6 Cognition cannot occur "by the force of facts"

A substantial part of Mabja's *The Appearance of Reality* consists of a detailed criticism of Indian and Tibetan *pramāṇa* thinkers, whom Mabja rejects for their claim that *pramāṇas* apply to their objects "by the force of fact" (Skt. *vastubala-pravṛtta*, Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs*).[38] Thus, Mabja considers the definitions of reliable means of knowledge found in the works of Dharmottara, Śaṅkaranandana, Prajñākaragupta, Devendrabuddhi, and Śākyabuddhi only to point out that they, in their attempt at grounding *pramāṇa* in facts, all inadvertently end up denying any possibility of reliable means of knowledge. As facts are simply not available, any epistemology that assumes otherwise has already failed.

For Mabja, a Svātantrika is a Madhyamaka who falls into this trap of accepting the self-defeating paradigm of epistemic means by the force of facts (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*), i.e. the notion that the mind can 1) "newly realize and experience its object free from superimposition, just as it objectively is" and 2) "accurately realize its object by means of evidence [apprehended in a way] that is free from delusion."[39] The Svātantrika's belief in such fact-based cognition ties in with his mistaken ascription of particular characteristics to conventional reality, an ascription that, in turn, equally involves a reification of emptiness. Hence, on the Svātantrika view, factual and objective *pramāṇas* establish both the relative phenomenon (Skt. *dharma*, Tib. *chos*) and its ultimate nature of emptiness (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*). When this reifying tendency is allowed to go unchecked, it develops into the position of a *stong pa mtshan mar smra ba*, "someone who teaches emptiness as if it were a mark (Skt. *nimitta*)."[40] Adhering to the idea that emptiness exists, indeed must exist, as an object of rational cognition, these realists in Madhyamaka guise miss the point of freedom from mental construction (Skt. *niṣprapañca*, Tib. *spros bral*) and so end up denying themselves liberation.[41] The term *stong pa mtshan mar smra ba* was according to Śākya Chokden also used by Mabja's co-student Tsang-nakpa (Tib. *gTsang nag pa*)[42] as a derogative reference to Chapa's position.[43]

As a general observation, we may note that much of Mabja's criticism of traditional *pramāṇa* theory targets the idea that constructed kinds and classes can be genuinely associated with real particulars. The realist *pramāṇa* theorist and the cryptorealist Svātantrika both think it possible to determine properties that, although constructed and insubstantial, can nevertheless somehow be used to develop a map of the real. For Mabja it is, however, impermissible to turn back in this way from the anti-essentialist path that the *pramāṇa* theorists/Svātantrikas have set out on with their critique of universals.[44] The full consequences of their

insight must be acknowledged, and so we cannot, Mabja argues, even conventionally continue to accept the notion of objectively grounded properties. When the analysis of the universal is carried through to its Madhyamaka consequences, no thought or perceptual appearance can retain any association with facts.

Whereas the Patsab-attributed *Illuminating Lamp* dismisses the notion of *pramāṇa* across the board,[45] Mabja insists that such means of knowledge are a natural and undeniable element in any successful enterprise, whether mundane or spiritual.[46] The dependently originating experience of ourselves, others, and the world indeed calls for the development of an account of trustworthy cognition. Having dismissed the very possibility of concepts corresponding to facts, reliable means of knowledge can, for Mabja, then only be that which is accepted as such by the world (Skt. *lokaprasiddha*, Tib. *'jig rten na grags pa*). Having seen that the two-tiered ontology of the *pramāṇa* school is hopelessly flawed, the Mādhyamika will have no qualms about rejecting the logicians' parsimonious typology, and so he can instead confidently follow Candrakīrti in expanding the array of *pramāṇas* in a way that better describes our actual experience of epistemological success. Yet no *pramāṇa* can, on Mabja's account, even conventionally lead to a certainty (Skt. *niścaya*, Tib. *nges pa*) that could never be proven wrong. In both the *Ornament of Reason* and the *The Appearance of Reality*, Mabja develops an argument against an idea that he refers to as that of the "single conceptual distinction" (Tib. *ldog pa gcig pu*),[47] i.e. the notion that two or more things may share the same property, and that the identification of such shared properties can thus be relied on in the drawing of definitive inferences leading to irrefutable conclusions. Mabja here argues that the unreal nature of universals renders any such Svātantrika claim to infallible judgment false. The Svātantrika's epistemological enterprise stands and falls with arguments of "definitive pervasion" (Tib. *khyab pa nges pa*), yet Dharmakīrti himself has refuted any actual existence of pervasive properties. Hence, in the absence of such properties, there cannot be any infallible inferences either. Indeed, we can have qualified expectations, so qualified that in the given situation any doubt about our judgment may be entirely unreasonable. Yet the notion of infallible certainty is in the end just as baseless as the belief in particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*). If there were, Mabja argues, such a thing as fact-based *pramāṇa*, all the claims and practices of the Svātantrikas would be sound and unobjectionable, but since not even conventionally are such *pramāṇas* available, all that the Svātantrikas say and do "is simply pathetic."[48]

2.1.7 Fallible **pramāṇas**

There are indeed, Mabja appears to be saying, such things as knowledge, reason, and certainty, yet they are not what the realist imagines.[49] In a discussion that is very telling about his stance on inference,[50] Mabja argues that karmic causality throughout successive lives can be proven simply by considering the overwhelming evidence that we have for concluding that one moment of mind leads to another. Without being able to identify any counterexample, we are informed

by self-awareness (Skt. *svasaṃvedana*, Tib. *rang rig*)[51] that this is indeed how it has always been. Hence, we can conclude that also the first moment of mind in the present life must have been preceded by a similar moment in another life. If, Mabja asks, we cannot consider that type of evidence conclusive, then how can we allow ourselves to, for example, infer the presence of fire based on the perception of smoke? In the latter case we do not have anything else to go by than the perception of regularity either. Certainty does not, we may conclude, for Mabja get any better than this. According to his view, a Madhyamaka clearly knows both certainty and conviction, but simply as undeniable cognitive events that take place within the unexamined world of practical transactions.[52] Upon examination all apparent natural laws will inevitably fall to the wayside, and so there is, as Mabja tersely states, upon examination no certainty at all.[53]

As Mabja sees it, the Svātantrika's requirement of incontestable certainty is, we might surmise, not just ultimately unachievable. It is as well a distorting notion that distracts us away from acknowledging and exploring those instruments of knowledge that we encounter in the world of practical transactions. It is those metaphysically transparent[54] means of knowledge that are already part of our cognitive horizon that can as well be cultivated and relied on for an unproblematic approach to emptiness – an approach that will not seduce us into reifying either of the two (interdependent) truths. The sense of certainty that ensues from the application of the merely apparent Madhyamaka-style *pramāṇas* must be appreciated simply as a reliable and undeniable factor for guidance and perspective; beyond that it cannot support any categorical mapping of the world. Proper means of knowledge are, based on Mabja's Madhyamaka interpretation, hence arguably just that which we already know them to be: time-tested means for practical success. This renders the *pramāṇas* metaphysically quite neutral and – as it would seem, given the absence of infallible conclusions – in principle unfixed and open for development.[55] While deliberately avoiding all claims to metaphysical truth, Mabja's Mādhyamika hence treats knowledge as a vital but very practical issue. In the following section we shall explore what Mabja's fallibabilist concern for "precisely the thing that appears" (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po 'di nyid*) may imply for his account of reason.

2.2 Reason and rationality

2.2.1 Mabja on the scope of inference

For Mabja, inference allows the Mādhyamikas to develop clear and decisive views about the two truths. As they apply the *pramāṇa* theorists' well-established threefold criterion for authenticity (Skt. *trairūpya*, Tib. *tshul gsum*)[56] they may, with respect to the relative reality, confidently establish such fundamental Buddhist truths as impermanence (Skt. *anityatā*, Tib. *mi rtag pa*) and absence of self (Skt. *anātmatā*, Tib. *bdag med*), just as they by the same method and authority may refute any sense of ultimate reality. Inference thus serves to eliminate obstacles to the perception of the Middle Way beyond the extremes of mental construction (Tib. *spros pa'i mtha'*).[57]

Yet, as we saw with perception,[58] inference too is in Mabja's hands given a strong antirealist spin, transforming it within its apparent, *pramāṇa*-theoretical foundations. Given that, upon ultimate analysis, none of the elements and relational structures involved in a logical argument can be identified, it follows, Mabja argues, that Madhyamaka inferences (including those that directly display the typical threefold structure) cannot be classified as "autonomous inferences" (Skt. **svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi rtags*) but must instead be considered "consequences" (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*), i.e. arguments that work on premises accepted by the opposing side only.[59] Although in a properly constructed argument the perceived relationship between subject, *probandum*, and *probans* will be convincing even to the Mādhyamikas themselves, the conclusion that one arrives at by putting the pieces of the argument together will nevertheless necessarily itself be a conceptual construction (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*), and so it cannot express any reality beyond what is merely apparent. Hence even the most perfect Madhyamaka argument can, for Mabja, never be classified as more than simply "mundane" (Skt. *laukika*, Tib. *'jig rten pa*) or "acknowledged by others" (Skt. *paraprasiddha*, Tib. *gzhan 'grags*).[60] Let us notice the delicacy of the position that Mabja here chooses to assume. For Mabja, Mādhyamikas make clear and definitive claims with respect to both of the truths based on arguments that, as we saw in 2.1.5, are deemed reliable from the perspective of not just the opponent, but also for the Mādhyamikas themselves. Nevertheless, he further argues, such Mādhyamika claims are, in being claims, entirely conventional, and so the arguments that establish them must, in this particular sense, also be classified as "acknowledged by others" only. They do not provide any ultimate probative support and, upon examination, they do not even in relative terms (Tib. *kun rdzob du*) tie into any facts. In short, for Mabja, Mādhyamikas will engage rationally and inferentially with respect to both versions of reality, relative as well ultimate, yet in so doing they acknowledge that this activity is itself exclusively of conventional and relative character.[61] How could inference have any actual or ultimate bearing when, as we saw in 2.1.2, there are no characteristics (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*, Tib. *mtshan nyid*) of ultimate reality? In fact, and as we shall see further explained over the next chapters,[62] all talk of ultimate truth is pure contrivance; and yet such discourse is, for Mabja, a necessary means for coming to genuine terms with "just that which appears" (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba tsam*).

2.2.2 Introducing **rational cognition**

Now if, from beginning to end, they are entirely conventional, how can we expect reason and proof to teach us anything at all about "the way things actually are" (Tib. *dngos po'i gnas lugs*)? How can we, in other words, as Nāgārjuna seems to encourage it, "rely on convention to realize the ultimate"?[63] Such questions, which go to the heart of the Madhyamaka epistemological paradox (Nāgārjuna teaches that thought is error, and yet the threshold to ultimate awakening) are raised and considered throughout Mabja's extant works. For our present purposes, let us take preliminary note of the following technical account, which attempts to

make the paradox intelligible. When a Mādhyamika inferential argument is applied and received, it has, for Mabja, a twofold consequence:

> Consider the mind that thinks with certainty, "Since this present appearance knows neither singularity nor plurality, it has no nature!" Two conceptual distinctions pertain to that mind, for there is realization, in determination, of appearance devoid of nature, as well as invalidation, by elimination, of true nature. The first of these is a [mind of] inference that realizes the matter to be proven based on proof featuring the three modes; and since at its specific time its object is relative, it is a conventional mind. The second of the two is the analytic mind's invalidation of constructs. As such, it is a mind of rational cognition and its object is the non-implicative negation of constructs, the ultimate truth.[64]

In this pregnant discussion we notice that Mabja, employing an apparatus developed in Chapa's works,[65] distinguishes inference (Skt. *anumāna*, *rjes dpag*) from so-called "rational cognition" (Tib. *rigs shes*). When the mind becomes certain that its object, the present appearance, is empty and devoid of nature (Skt. *svabhāva*), then it has, as it were, access to both of the truths, for by cognizing the relative appearance as it is, without any superimposition of real existence, it automatically realizes the non-implicative negation (Skt. *prasajyapratiṣedha*, Tib. *med dgag*) of mental constructs that is the ultimate truth. Relative reality is realized in positive determination (Skt. *pariccheda*, Tib. *yongs gcod*), while the ultimate is accessed through negation and elimination (Skt. *vyavaccheda*, Tib. *rnam bcad*). The first of these two conceptually discernable aspects (Skt. *vyāvṛtti*, Tib. *ldog pa*), which pertain to the same mind of certainty, is termed "inference," while the second is known as "rational cognition." For Chapa it is, however, crucial that rational cognition be understood as accessing a genuine object (Skt. *viṣaya*, Tib. *yul*), namely the ultimate truth, and for him it is precisely by virtue of its holding such an object that rational cognition can, as he wants it to, be classified as *pramāṇa*.[66] As we shall next see, Mabja here instead rejects the notion of any actual cognition of a genuine object.

Inference, Mabja explains, is as a reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇa*) bound by the rules of logic and argumentation.[67] Hence an inferential argument must prove a specific probandum (Skt. *sādhya*, Tib. *bsgrub bya*) with respect to a properly established subject (Skt. *dharmin*, Tib. *chos can*) by means of evidence (Skt. *liṅga*, Tib. *rtags*) that displays the required "pervasion," or entailment (Skt. *vyāpti*, Tib. *khyab pa*). If the evidence did not relate properly to both the subject and that which is sought to be proven about the subject, the argument would be deficient and so incapable of proving anything. While there may obviously be disagreement about the specifics, the general concepts involved in the *pramāṇa* theorist stance are, we may surmise, quite commonsensical, to the degree that it is hard to imagine any serious objection to them that if accepted would not imply a collapse into irrationality. The problem for the Mādhyamika arises, as we have already noted, when such rules of reason are employed to prove emptiness (Skt.

śūnyatā, Tib. *stong pa nyid*), a principle that by definition transcends the conceivable.

In 2.1.6 we noticed Mabja's scorching critique of the notion of genuine pervasion (Skt. *vyāpti*, Tib. *khyab pa*), and for him it is imperative that none of the above elements of inference be ascribed any actual reach beyond what is merely apparent and conventional. Indeed, the fatal error of the "emptiness reificationist" who "treats emptiness as if it were a mark" (Tib. *stong pa mtshan mar smra ba*) and of whom we heard in 2.1.6, is precisely the belief that inference is somehow capable of framing the ultimate.[68] Still, the need to establish emptiness by rational means cannot be explained away, and so inferential reasoning must be developed to the extent that it can be reliably and convincingly employed, both in private (for oneself) and in public (for others). The application of such inference to *śūnyatā* must then, if it is to succeed, both establish its theorem as well as dissolve all forms of mental construction (including the framework of the inference itself), leaving no trace of commitment or even a conclusion behind. Mabja's task is daunting, for what is required is that an inference for emptiness be both definitive and yet transcendent of itself. Part of the solution that Mabja proposes is a formal distinction between *rjes dpag* and *rigs shes*.

Let us recall that, for Mabja, non-conceptual sense cognition enjoys, conventionally speaking, unmediated access to illusory dependent origination. Hence its field of experience consists of appearance devoid of nature (Tib. *snang la rang bzhin med pa*) or, if we want, emptiness in relative terms. This implicative negation (Skt. *paryudāsa*, Tib. *ma yin dgag*), which is encountered empirically, can as well be ascertained and determined (Tib. *yongs su gcod pa*) inferentially. That is, as we are told in the passage cited above, precisely what happens when a properly constructed Madhyamaka argument, such as the one from the absence of one and many, is employed and understood. Yet, as we were also told in that passage, such determination further implies the invalidation of all constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*), including the argument's own conclusion. Thereby the mind will, Mabja argues, discover the perfectly rational perspective (Tib. *rigs shes*) and so realize an ultimate truth that cannot be formulated in terms of a subject (i.e. the present appearance (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba*)) that possesses a certain property (i.e. emptiness).

While both of these cognitive features (*yongs gcod* with respect to relative truth and *rnam bcad* with respect to the ultimate) pertain to the same ascertaining consciousness, it is only the former aspect of positive determination that can be classified as genuine inference (Skt. *anumāna*, Tib. *rjes dpag*). The latter can only be called so in a derivative sense.[69] In fact, when push comes to shove, rational cognition (Tib. *rigs shes*) is neither reason nor consciousness. Responding to an opponent who accuses him of having denied any cognitive efficacy of rational cognition by distinguishing it from conventional inference, Mabja explains:

> Rational cognition has no object of evaluation and it does not positively determine any object. We therefore accept the consequence that this is no actual reliable means of cognition, and that it is not actually cognition.[70]

2.2.3 Objectivity and objectification

It is time to draw some conclusions. Inference has, for Mabja, two aspects: inference *simpliciter* and the so-called rational perspective (Tib. *rigs shes*). The former is a conventional tool that belongs to the undeniable and yet, upon analysis, utterly unfounded world of practical transactions. Rational cognition, on the other hand, is in a sense both the culmination and the end of inference, for in being the perfection of applied logic, rational cogntion is a perspective so eminently reasonable that it cannot actually be assumed. Indeed, Mabja accepts that this is not a genuine cognition (Tib. *shes pa*) and that it has no actual object.

As the authentic acknowledgement of *dharmatā*, the true nature of things beyond all subjective delusions (Skt. *bhrānta*, Tib. *'khrul ba*), rational cognition is the model of the perfectly objective mind. Yet, curiously, based on Mabja's "ontology," no objects are available, and so there really is nothing to be objective about. We are reminded of Mabja's treatment of the ultimate (Skt. *paramārtha*, Tib. *don dam*): there are no characteristics of the ultimate, yet unless we are shown some, the truth of the former statement will continue to evade us. In the same way as ultimate reality, *rigs shes* is, we may surmise, a principle that is derivable if we accept as axioms the possibility of error and its absence. And yet, based on Madhyamaka analysis, all such dichotomies are clearly mere dependent imputations (Tib. *brten nas btags pa'i rten 'brel*), and hence, when examined, empty of reality – "even in terms of the relative" (Tib. *kun rdzob tsam du yang*), as Mabja likes to emphasize. We may imagine Mabja granting us that, as the ideal, perfectly rational perspective, rational cognition is, if not the view from nowhere, then certainly not a view from anywhere.

Mabja often refers to rational cogntion and ultimate truth so matter-of-factly that we may get the impression that he sees them as something more concrete than here suggested. We must also note that he often, as it were, stops short of simply denying these two principles, hence perhaps indicating some sort of ineffable, superior mode of being and cognizing that would be underlying these terms. Yet a natural reading of Mabja's Madhyamaka does not support such a transcendentalist interpretation. Let us here listen to the way Mabja explains a verse attributed to Nāgārjuna:

> The Master himself teaches:
>
> *Just as heat is the nature of fire*
> *And sweetness the nature of molasses*
> *Emptiness is held to be*
> *The nature of all phenomena.*
>
> This statement does not conflict with the earlier statement that phenomena are empty of their own individual natures. In reality all phenomena do not have any established nature at all. When it is said that "their nature is emptiness," then that is simply the presentation of a superimposition in

> consideration of this lack of establishment. [Emptiness] is not accepted as a cognizable quality, such as existence or non-existence.[71]

For Mabja, *śūnyatā* itself is a superimposition (Tib. *sgro 'dogs*), a noun that has no referent, and so there is no discovery of emptiness beyond the acknowledgement that all lacks essence and foundation. "The empty nature of things" does not pick out any separately cognizable substance or quality.

Rather than as actual facts and cognitive options, ultimate truth and rational cognition are perhaps better understood as logical necessities: implicit and required categories that come with the very notion of reason. From the perspective of *saṃvṛti* (i.e. the only *perspective* that can really be called so), ultimate truth and rational cognition are both justified and inevitable, because the world does think in terms of correct and incorrect, and if there is such a thing as error about the way things are, there must also, in principle, be the possibility of getting it right. And yet, as all such interdependent constructs, they fall apart the moment we subject them to analytic pressure. Despite their appearance, "rational cognition" and "ultimate truth" are, for Mabja, mere idealizations, mere practical constructs.

On such an understanding, where does the path of Madhyamaka reasoning take us? Well, not towards some transcendental dimension of perfect authenticity, because the term "ultimate reality" has, for Mabja, no referent beyond the present appearance (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba*). Nor can the Middle Way be accomplished by achieving a cognitive level of perfect objectivity, because the very possibility of such detached factualness is, for him, precisely what Nāgārjuna and the *Prajñāpāramitā* deny. As we have heard, rational cognition has no proper object and it is not actual cognition. If, as I have suggested, rational cognition is thus better seen as an ideal paradigm than a concrete mental option, we may want to see the pursuit of rational cognition as the cultivation of an attitude: as the development of a perspective on, and an approach to, the present appearance, which in the absence of objects we may still call objectifying.

2.2.4 Articulating voidness

Rather than establishing a transcendent truth, the so-called "proofs of emptiness" bring, as we have seen in Mabja's interpretation, the Mādhyamikas back to the contents of experience, contents that they may relate to in reasoned and intelligent ways. As we bring this chapter to a close, let us notice an important distinction that Mabja draws between what is the case "ultimately" (Tib. *don dam pa*r) and what can be said about "ultimate states of affairs" (Tib. *don dam pa'i yul*). Mabja generally acknowledges that no proof or refutation could have any real bearing on the ultimate, and that therefore no thesis should be advanced or defended with regard to the ultimate either. Proof and refutation, however, rightly belong in the realm of what is merely relative:

> For a Mādhyamika, there are ultimately no positive or negative theses at all. In terms of the ultimate, therefore, we do not create any affirmative or

> negative theses whatsoever either. As for the mere relative, however, in the present context [of refuting the misconceptions of others] we present a thesis that is a mere eliminative negation, and in general we also set forth theses that are determinative affirmations.[72]

All theses are clearly of conventional relevance only. Hence, also the Madhyamaka refutations of genuine reality pertain exclusively to the realm of what is merely apparent, and do not capture anything ultimate. This message might leave us with the impression that, as all discourse is merely conventional, *paramārtha* must be an utterly transcendent, ineffable reality that the Mādhyamika may indicate only by maintaining noble silence. Yet, as we know, Mabja wishes to counter any reification of either the ultimate or the relative, and so neither affirmation nor negation can be allowed to feed the mind's tendency to construct marks (Skt. *nimitta*, Tib. *mtshan ma*) and characteristics (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*, Tib. *mtshan nyid*; Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*). Hence, blocking any appeal to a "perfectly real" beyond the immediate experience of illusion-like dependent origination, Mabja proceeds with the following clarifications:

> Furthermore, [relative theses] may concern relative states of affairs (as when it is said, for example, that relatively phenomena are like an illusion, apparent yet devoid of nature), as well as ultimate states of affairs (such as the statements, "ultimately phenomena do not arise;" or "they are beyond mental constructions and transcend all claims"). In the first case, a genuine thesis is held wholeheartedly; in the second, however, the thesis is a superimposition. One is concerned with the mistaken beliefs in the existence of things such as arising with respect to that which remains devoid of any essential establishment and is beyond all constructions of negation and affirmation. Wishing to dispel these misconceptions, one makes use of terms such as "absence of arising" and so teaches through superimposition. There is no wholehearted belief in even the mere marks that negate ultimate arising, constructs, claims, etc. Therefore, such negations are not genuine theses. Hence, it should be understood that this [presence of theses concerning ultimate states of affairs] does not contradict the explanation that there are neither positive nor negative theses in terms of the ultimate.[73]

No argument can in fact go beyond the relative experience of something that seems to be the case, yet is not so once thoroughly examined. Still, this does not prevent a Mādhyamika from presenting claims about an ultimate, true condition of things. The two truths are arrived at in mutual dependence, just as the notions of long and short,[74] and when two things owe each other their establishment they are, following Nāgārjuna's arguments, equally void. In this sense the two truths are on an equal footing and so, we may surmise, if something can be said about one of them, it follows that the other must be within the purview of language and thought as well. In the above passage, which appears to capture his entire epistemological enterprise, Mabja acknowledges this interdependency, and hence

voidness, of the two truths by specifying that, while nothing bears final analysis, Mādhyamikas are equally comfortable with speaking about both relative *and* ultimate reality. When assessing that which appears, they find a universal lack of establishment, and as they acknowledge this lack of foundation, Mādhyamikas will as well be ready to make their insight known to others. They may then tell us, for example, that "ultimately phenomena do not arise." Yet, as they speak, Mabja wishes to highlight, genuine Mādhyamikas do not perceive any actual ultimate truth, not even in terms of the mere negation of falsehood. Rather, "with respect to that which remains devoid of any essential establishment and is beyond all constructions of negation and affirmation" they speak *as if* there were some ultimate truth of the matter. Hence, when Mādhyamikas treat the ultimate truth, they treat it as a superimposition (Tib. *sgro 'dogs*) and there is no genuine belief (Tib. *zhe bas 'dod pa*) in any of the advanced propositions. Curiously, in this light, "ultimate truth" is in a sense *less* real than the relative, for, while the notion of the former is a construct set forth as a corrective against mistaken reifications, the latter refers to an undeniable experience of illusion-like dependent origination. Hence, Mabja explains, it is only with respect to the latter truth that the Mādhyamika makes genuine assertions.

Mabja wants us, we may conclude, to treat the contents of experience carefully and intelligently, yet without harboring any false expectations of facts. Truth and falsity are strictly conventional, a dichotomy that is part and parcel of the human condition, yet never pertains to anything independent of the mind or transcendent of that which is merely apparent. The present experience (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba*) is an experience of dependent origination, and the apparent causes and effects can be described and explored as such.

Yet all that appears is delusion, for there is nothing that remains in the perception of the noble ones (Skt. *ārya*, Tib. *'phags pa*) and nothing withstands final investigation. The culmination of reason, the so-called rational perspective (Tib. *rigs shes*), is merely the non-implicative negation (Skt. *prasajyapratiṣedha*, Tib. *med dgag*) of the mind's constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*) and hence not an actual cognition of anything at all. "Rational cognition" does not arrive at any positive or negative conclusion, and it has no genuine content. It is within this atmosphere of radical denial that Mabja insists on reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *tshad ma*).

2.3 On the nature of appearance

2.3.1 A baseless path to nowhere?

Mabja grounds the two truths in the immediate experience (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba*), and we have noticed his peculiar appropriation/transformation of the *pramāṇa* theorist view that sense perception is a cognitive mode, free of those errors that otherwise pervasively plague thought and conceptuality.[75] Yet, although emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*, Tib. *stong pa nyid*) can, for him, hence be seen to be transmitted to the senses, Mabja nevertheless contends that in the end all of whatever may appear will be nothing but delusion.[76] Appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) as

such is therefore for him finally to be transcended upon the attainment of Buddhahood,[77] and this relinquishment of appearance is moreover only possible as the result of gradual and sustained practice on the Madhyamaka path.

It is, Mabja explains, therefore necessary to distinguish that which is to be negated by reasoning (Tib. *rigs pa'i dgag bya*) from what is to be eliminated by means of the path (Tib. *lam gyi dgag bya*).[78] The former expresses itself as conceptual grasping (Tib. *zhen pa*), the cause of suffering, which is to be overcome by the realization of absence of nature (Skt. *niḥsvabhāva*, Tib. *rang bzhin med pa*). The latter object of negation (Skt. *pratiṣedhya*, Tib. *dgag bya*) endures on the other hand throughout the entire path of cultivation (Skt. *bhāvanāmārga*, Tib. *bsgom lam*), and, while not preventing the realization of emptiness, this factor is indeed necessary for the bodhisattva's accomplishment of virtues (Skt. *kuśala*, Tib. *dge ba*).[79] Constituted by mere imprints of ignorance (Tib. *ma rig pa'i bag chags*), it is this subtle obscuration that is responsible for the bodhisattva's perceptions (Tib. *snang ba*). Finally, in his treatment of the Buddha's vision, Mabja happily deflates his account to the point that it virtually denies the core features of Mahāyāna gnoseolgy:

> As already explained, ultimate reality is beyond the constructed objects of cognition, expression, and evaluation, and when investigated, relative reality does not exist as particular characteristics. It is therefore established that all objects of the mind that involves appearance are false and that all minds are deluded. Therefore, if [Buddhahood] would involve a mind of appearance that cognizes all objects, as they are and in their multiplicity, deluded appearances would not have been transcended [in Buddhahood].[80]

For Mabja, the Buddha's omniscient wisdom (Tib. *ji snyed pa'i mkhyen pa*) and the "form bodies" (Skt. *rūpakāya*, Tib. *gzugs kyi sku*) are hence merely apparent to sentient beings (Tib. *gzhan ngo la snang ba*). As such they are delusional distorted appearances (Tib. *'khrul snang*) and hence have no bearing on the Buddha's own perspective (Tib. *sangs rgyas kyi rang ngo*).

For Mabja, we might conclude, all appearance is necessarily empty, yet emptiness itself has no appearance. If he accepts such natural laws that govern the manifestation and disappearance of *snang ba*, we may wonder whether Mabja, despite all efforts to the contrary, has not himself in the end been seduced by realist intuitions. If, in short, appearance is one thing and emptiness another (as it would seem given the assertion that the former must fall away upon the completion of the path), it is hard to think of a reason why it should not be granted that conventionally appearances are objectively characterized in terms of being delusion, obscuration, and the like. If the Svātantrika strays from the Great Madhyamaka (Tib. *dbu chen*) by asserting a sense of objectivity that is merely conventional, would not this idea of appearance as a negandum, invariably linked with a metaphysical force termed "delusion," just as much be a betrayal of Madhyamaka antirealism? Likewise, while Mabja elsewhere forcefully describes the disastrous consequences of the reification of emptiness, we may wonder

whether the utterly transcendent version of *śūnyatā* that has now emerged in his account would not itself fall under the category of such debilitating constructs.

2.3.2 Back to that which appears

Taking the general thrust of his arguments into account, I believe that, if faced with such concerns, Mabja could respond by reiterating his earlier statement that "the appearance itself is neither existent nor non-existent, neither true nor false."[81] The convention "the ultimate truth" is thus, he might remind us, still simply applied in consideration of the way that the present appearance defies all extremes of mental construction (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*). Seen in this light, the account of appearance as a *negandum* is then simply to be taken as a description of the way in which this realization of freedom from constructs (Skt. *niṣprapañca*, Tib. *spros bral*) may occur to the mind, without thereby becoming entangled in any metaphysical claims about the Being of appearance, the Emptiness of that, and a relationship between the two. Conventional and ultimate truths are, as he has specified, mutually dependent notions that ensue in relation to simply whatever appears (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba*).

For Mabja, "the rational perspective" (Tib. *rigs shes*) arises through the deconstruction of constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*) and, by cultivating this insight, there will, he promises, be perfect awakening and Buddhahood. Yet the path and fruition are, for him, just as unsupported and conventional as the rest of relative reality. They require explanation, of course, but it is equally obvious that such explanation cannot be given in a way that resists further analysis. I suggest that it is this point that Mabja wishes to make when he treats appearance and delusion as coextensive, and so assumes a strikingly agnostic stance on Buddhahood.[82]

When in *The Appearance of Reality* an opponent argues for the necessity of a continuum of self-awareness (Skt. *svasaṃvedana*, Tib. *rang rig*),[83] having been provoked by Mabja's minimalist explanation of "mental non-doing" (Skt. *amanasikāra*, Tib. *yid la mi byed pa*) and the negation of constructs (Tib. *spros pa med par dgag pa*) as the way to complete the "accumulation of gnosis" (Skt. *jñānasambhara*, Tib. *ye shes kyi tshogs*) that culminates at Buddhahood,[84] Mabja tellingly replies:

> Whether or not [we explain the path in terms of a] cessation [of self-awareness] it will, upon examination, not even conventionally stand up to reason.[85]

It must here be recalled that Mabja accepts self-awareness in terms of *saṃvṛti*. The issue at stake here can therefore not be the relevance of the principle of self-awareness, but must rather be the feasibility of explanation in general. Hence, Mabja here bluntly grants that no account of the path or the fruition will be resilient to a thorough analysis or immune to a skeptical attack. Once such reasoning is employed there does not even conventionally remain any trace of reason or justification to support the normative discourse. Yet Mabja's assent to the

voidness of explanation is importantly not the end, but rather the beginning of description, for he next proceeds to account for the path as seen "from the perspective of no analysis" (Tib. *ma dpyad pa'i blo ngor*). Conventional reality, we are reminded, does not stand up to reason and yet, as we have seen, requires engagements that are both intelligent as well as metaphysically transparent.

Mabja's Madhyamaka is a Buddhist path of awakening from ignorance. It asserts that only a complete and non-implicative negation (Skt. *prasajyapratiṣedha*, Tib. *med dgag*) of all aspects of conceptual construction (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*) can accomplish its soteriological aims, and that for such a negation to be achieved even the very notion of appearance/experience (Tib. *snang ba*) will have to be relinquished as well. Hence, the treatment of *snang ba* as a *negandum*. In his epistemology Mabja nevertheless locates both of the truths in relation to mere experience and he explains, as we have seen, that, among the claims that Madhyāmikas will make, only those concerning relative states of affairs (Tib. *kun rdzob pa'i yul*)" are "wholeheartedly accepted" (Tib. *zhes bas 'dod pa*). The statement that, in terms of the relative, phenomena are like illusions and dreams is hence, for Mabja, the presentation of a "genuine thesis" (Tib. *dam bca' mtshan nyid pa*), whereas claims concerning ultimate states of affairs (Tib. *don dam pa'i yul*) – i.e. that things have no arising, transcend the mind's constructs, etc. – amount to no more than pragmatic superimpositions (Skt. *samāropa*, Tib. *sgro btags pa*) that cannot be genuinely believed in.[86] We may conclude that since, for Mabja, ultimate truth is strictly speaking an impossibility, any discourse that refers to such a mode of veridicality is (even if it takes the form of negation) in the business of developing a therapeutic but highly contrived perspective. In the end, since all talk of ultimate truth participates in the construction of a trans-experiential reality, such discourse cannot be wholeheartedly accepted by the Mādhyamika.

There is no ultimate truth to be discovered beyond the present appearance (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po 'di nyid*), and yet there is, as we have also seen, nothing at all in the discourse of appearance that for Mabja features any ineliminable relevance. On the contrary, he specifies that upon examination we will find that, even conventionally, "the appearance itself is neither existent nor non-existent, neither true nor false,"[87] and from the perspective of the awakened ones not even mere experience is observed:

> As for the way that this mind [i.e. the mind of the Buddhas and of the āryas in equipoise] encounters the objects of cognition, it certainly does not observe any sort of truth, absence of truth, etc. with respect to whatever it is that appears. Indeed, there is not even a perception of mere appearance. Hence, this mind sees in a way [that acknowledges] the lack of establishment of any essences at all.[88]

This, then, is Mabja's radical stance. For him, we may conclude, a sweeping negation of both ultimate emptiness and conventional experience is required if we are to encounter empty appearance without resorting to the construction of a tran-

scendent, metaphysical reality. No matter how compelling such foundational frameworks might come across at first glace, since they support the mind's blinding tendency to construct marks and signs (Skt. *nimitta*, Tib. *mtshan ma*) of an underlying mode of being, they contribute for Mabja inextricably to the vicious circle of painful existence (Skt. *saṃsāra*, Tib. *'khor ba*).[89] Once the construction of such marks (Skt. *nimitta*, Tib. *mtshan ma*) has been overcome by acknowledging the infinite scope of Madhyamaka deconstruction, dependent origination (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*, Tib. *rten 'brel*) remains itself the very nature of nirvanic peace (Skt. *śānti*, Tib. *zhi ba*):

> From the perspective of such a mind [i.e. the mind of the Buddha], dependent origination itself remains the natural pacification of even the marks of appearance. Thus, dependent origination is itself also referred to as "peace" [by Nāgārjuna in the opening praises of the *Root of the Middle Way*].[90]

2.3.3 Pulling the carpet from under the two truths

Mabja's approach is, we might say, skepticism with a vengeance, for, while accepting the premises of the skeptic argument, he rejects any conclusion regarding the infeasibility of knowledge. Rather than inviting us to rest in the relinquishment of all knowledge claims, Mabja instead wishes to extend the Madhyāmika critique so that it now comes to encompass even its own foundations and, hence, by extension, two of our most eminently plausible intuitions: 1) "it is at least in principle possible for there to be something about our experience that is so obvious that it cannot be coherently denied"; and 2) "things may be different from what they seem." Without recourse to these two separate notions it is not possible to formulate any meaningful version of the two truths as appearance and emptiness, nor can one, for that matter, support any substantial account of error and its correction. Yet by now we have seen Mabja undermining both of these intuitions, for, while denying the reality of anything beyond just that which appears, he has as well proceeded to refute even "mere experience" – arguably our best candidate for undeniability. Where, then, does Mabja's position on appearance take us?

Let us recall that, while obviously wanting to account for the *Buddhadharma's* path (Skt. *mārga*, Tib. *lam*) and fruition (Skt. *phala*, Tib. *'bras bu*), Mabja prefers, when it comes to describing the perspective of enlightenment itself (Tib. *sangs rgyas kyi rang ngo*), either agnosticism or a minimalist gnoseology that, in asserting simply that "the Buddha knows things as they are," from a Buddhist perspective hardly does more than stating the obvious. For Mabja there appears to be something deeply illegitimate about the request for a final explanation of the Mādhyamikas' ultimate goal and destination. The request assumes, we may suggest, that a categorical mapping of the world is an actual possibility, and for Mabja it is, as we have seen, in seeking to cater to such concerns that the Svātantrikas loose track of the Middle Way. To be a genuine Mādhyamika one must have comprehended the futility of all efforts to achieve secure ontic or

epistemic foundations. If such aims were even in principle achievable, all would be well and fine with the Svātantrika project.[91] Yet, since such foundational structures are clearly unobtainable, the continued belief to the contrary is detrimental to the Buddhist endeavour of seeking salvation through the recognition of "things as they are" (Skt. *yathābhūta*, Tib. *dngos po'i gnas lugs*). Indeed, on Mabja's Madhyamaka orientation, things are so that they simply do not permit any final, irreversible conclusions.

Notes

1 In Tibet a non-implicative negation is generally distinguished from an implicative negation (Skt. *paryudāsa*, Tib. *ma yin dgag*) in that, in the case of the latter, the affirmation of some property or entity other than the negated is implied by the negation itself (as in "this is not a Brahmin," which, in denying the subject's being of that particular caste, nevertheless presupposes its existence in general – possibly as a member of the caste of commoners). Non-implicative negation is pure and simple in that it leaves nothing implicitly affirmed. Note, however, that for Chapa these definitions are not acceptable (see below p. 57, *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* 87, and Hugon forthcoming). On the two negations in Indian Buddhism, see, e.g., Kajiyama 1973.

2 While in the Vedic context *vidhi* and *pratiṣedha* are originally injunctions and prohibitions, these principles come in the Indian logico-epistemological traditions to refer not just to affirmative and negating statements, but also specifically to the presences and absences to which such statements may refer (see, e.g., Dreyfus 1997 233–35).

3 See, e.g., *The Appearance of Reality* 812–13.

4 Cf., e.g., ibid. 767 and 812.

5 Pairing with the "provisional," or "expedient meaning" (Skt. *neyārtha*, Tib. *drang don*), the principle of "the definitive meaning" is used in a hermeneutical effort to distinguish within the body of Words of the Buddha (Skt. *buddhavacana*, Tib. *sangs rgyas kyi bka'*) those statements that require interpretation from the ones that are true just as they stand. These two modes of meaning, or of subject matter found within the Buddhist teachings, are hence related to the principle of two truths (see p. 14 n. 24).

6 Classically presented in the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*, the three *dharmacakras*, or "wheels of the Teachings," are a hermeneutical device meant to coordinate and explain the apparent discrepancies between the *śrāvaka* and *bodhisattva* teachings, as well as the internal conflicts within the latter. They crucially involve an appeal to the notions of definitive versus expedient meaning (see above n. 5).

7 See *Ornament of Reason* 6.

8 See ibid. 8–9.

9 See p. 14 n. 25.

10 In the paradigm of the "three natures" (Skt. *trisvabhāva*, Tib. *ngo bo nyid gsum*), the imaginary nature includes the phenomena of object and subject, as well as all that is expressed in word and thought. Despite its appearance, all of this is in fact thoroughly non-existent. The reason that such phenomena appear, however, is the continuum of moments of karmically conditioned consciousness, which in Yogācāra/Cittamātra thought is known as the "dependent nature" (Skt. *paratantra*, Tib. *gzhan dbang*). While such consciousness appears as a duality of object and subject, it is itself always non-dual. On the paradigm of the three natures, non-dual consciousness hence exists as the basis for the appearances of duality, and it can only be qualified as non-existent in the sense that it does not exist *in the way* it appears. Finally, the so-called "thoroughly established nature" (Skt. *pariniṣpanna*, Tib. *yongs grub*) is the intrinsic nature (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*) of this consciousness, i.e. its original and changeless

condition of being devoid of that which it appears as, or in other words, of being empty of the imaginary nature. In Yogācāra philosophy the three natures are as central as are the two truths in the Madhyamaka. A classical exposition of this triple principle is found in Maitreya/Asaṅga's *Distinguishing the Middle from Extremes* (Skt. *Madhyāntavibhāga*. Transl. in Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2007 and D'Amato 2012) with its commentary (edited in Nagao 1964, transl. in D'Amato 2012) and sub-commentary (edited in Yamaguchi 1966) by the Yogācāra luminaries Vasubandhu and Sthiramati (both fourth century). On Yogācāra and the three natures, see, e.g., May 1971, Tillemans 1990 vol. 1, 53 ff., and Lamotte 1935.

11 *Ornament of Reason* 6. On the "rational perspective" (Tib. *rigs shes*), see Section 2.2.

12 *The Appearance of Reality* 755–56:

> *de ltar na bden pa gnyis kyi ngo bo ni / bum pa snam bu ltar phan tshun ngo bo tha dad ma yin te / gnyis ka yang gzhi ji ltar snang ba'i ngo bo 'di nyid la 'jog pa'i phyir ro // 'di nyid la bden pa gnyis su ji ltar gzhag ce na / de ji ltar dngos po gcig nyid ltos sa tha dad la ltos nas ring thung ngam rgyu 'bras snga phyi gnyis su 'jog pa ltar / ngo bo tha dad med kyang blo ngo gnyis la ltos nas bden gnyis su rnam par gzhag ste / 'di ltar ji ltar snang pa'i dngos po 'di nyid tha snyad pa'i blo 'khrul pa'i ngo na ji ltar rnyed cing grub pa kun rdzob kyis shes pa'i ngo bor bzhag la / de nyid 'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag gi ye shes ma 'khrul pa'am / rigs shes kyi ngo na ji ltar rnyed cing grub pa don dam pa'i ngo bor gzhag ste /.*

13 Cf. ibid. 813ff. (see Chapter 2.3.1).

14 *Ornament of Reason* 40:

> *ji ltar snang ba 'di nyid 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhag mi rtog pa'i ye shes sam / brtags zhing dpyad nas 'jug pa'i shes pa'i ngo na yod med dam bden rdzun nam shes brjod gzhal bya la sogs pa'i ci'i ngo bor yang grub pa med cing spros pa'i mtha' thams cad dang bral ba tsam la don dam pa'i bden pa zhes tha snyad tsam du byas par zad de /.*

15 *The Appearance of Reality* 760:

> *mtshan nyid la sogs pa'i sgo nas sgro btags nas ma bstan na don dam pa mtshan nyid la sogs pa med pa'i tshul gyis mi rtogs la de ltar ma rtogs na yang don dam mtshan nyid dang bcas pa la sogs par zhen pa las thar pa mi thob pa'i phyir / thar pa 'dod pas de ltar rtogs par bya ba'i don du tha snyad du mtshan nyid la sogs pa'i sgo nas sgro btags la bstan dgos pa yin ste.*

See, likewise, ibid. 762:

> From the perspective of reasoning one fails entirely to find any phenomenon that supports true characteristics, and so it is established that the bearers of such characteristics are beyond the scope of language and mind. Therefore, given this absence of a support for them, it certainly follows that there are no characteristics either. When earlier we nevertheless set forth characteristics [of the ultimate truth] the explanation was given in terms of superimposition, so that it may be realized that there are no characteristics.
>
> *rigs ngor bden pa'i mtshan nyid rten pa'i chos ga' yang ma rnyed pas mtshan gzhi sgra blo'i yul las 'das par grub la / de nyid kyis na rten med pas mtshan nyid kyang med par nges pa yin no // 'on kyang sngar mtshan nyid smros pa ni mtshan nyid med par rtogs par bya ba'i don sgro btags nas bstan par yin no //.*

Cf. also *Ornament of Reason* 38.

16 Distinguishing Prāsaṅgikas from Svātantrikas based on whether particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*) are rejected or accepted in terms of the relative truth has generally become known as a centerpiece of Tsongkhapa's original

Madhyamaka thought. As Tsongkhapa and his followers in the Gelug school (Tib. *dge lugs*) gained increasing religious and political power in Tibet, their philosophical viewpoints were also increasingly targeted by their non-Gelug opponents. Much of Tsongkhapa's Madhyamaka exegesis stands and falls with the feasibility and appropriateness of the above distinction, and the issue of whether Svātantrikas may be said to accept conventional, particular characteristics has historically become tremendously contested. See Section 3.2.

17 *Ornament of Reason* 29:

> *skye dgag la sogs pa'ang rmi lam sgyu ma ltar shes pa 'khrul pa'i ngo na de ltar snang ba tsam yin gyi rang rgyud du smra ba'i dbu ma pas brtags pa lta bu'i rang gi mtshan nyid du gyur pa ni kun rdzobs du yang med la*.

18 The Abhidharma thought that is expressed in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* distinguishes between particular and general characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*/*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*/*spyi mtshan*) on the basis of that which is uniquely characteristic of a given *dharma*, i.e. of a certain irreducible category of the existent, versus that which such a *dharma* may characteristically share with other *dharmas* (see, e.g., Dunne 2004, 81–82 and Arnold 2006, 17–22). In the *pramāṇa* theory of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, however, *svalakṣaṇas* become the momentary (Skt. *kṣaṇika*, Tib. *skad cig ma*) and causally efficacious (Skt. *arthakriyāsāmarthya*, Tib. *don byed nus p*a) particulars that are the objects of perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*, Tib. *mngon sum*). Ineffable and inconceivable, they feature ultimate reality (Skt. *paramārthasat*, Tib. *don dam par yod pa*). In Buddhist *pramāṇa* theory these real particulars pair with the constructed universals (Skt. *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *spyi mtshan*) that are the pseudo-objects of the conceptual mind and language. See, e.g., Dreyfus 1997, 60–73, Dunne 2006, 53–98, and Arnold 2006 22–31. In Mabja's Madhyamaka the idea of the *svalakṣaṇa* is seen to involve an implicit acceptance of objective and definitively ascertainable facts. It is, as we shall see, hence for him the downfall of the Svātantrika.

19 See *The Appearance of Reality* 780 (translation on p. 62).

20 Ibid. 774:

> *ci ste rigs shes kyis dpyad na ma rnyed pas dngos po don dam par bden pa khegs mod kho bo cag don dam par dngos po rnams bden no zhes ni mi smra'i / 'on kyang zla gnyis la sogs pa ni kun rdzob tu yang dngos por mi bden la / zla ba gcig la sogs pa ni kun rdzob tu yang rang gi mtshan nyid kyi dngos po bden pa yin zhe 'di tsam zhig smra ba yin no // de ni rigs shes kyis ma dmigs pas mi khegs te rigs shes kyi yul ma yin pa'i phyir mig shes kyis smra ba ma dmigs pas mi khegs pa bzhin no //*.

21 Ibid. 774:

> *gal te rigs shes kyis ma rnyed pas / kun rdzob tu rang gi mtshan nyid kyi dngos por bden pa mi khegs na / sad pa'i shes pas ma rnyed pas kyang rmi lam du rang gi mtshan nyid kyi dngos po mi khegs par 'gyur te rmi lam sad pa'i shes pa'i yul ma yin par mtshung pas so // de ltar yang 'dod par mi nus te yul thams cad dngos po bden pa dang de 'dzin blo thams cad 'dzin stang ma 'khrul bar 'gyur ba'i phyir ro //*.

22 Cf. *Ornament of Reason*, 54–56, where this point is argued extensively.

23 *The Appearance of Reality* 775:

> *kun du dpyad na rang mtshan gyis skye ba med mod kun rdzob rigs ngor mi 'jog gi 'on kyang ma dpyad par 'jig rten gyi blo ngor brten nas 'byung ba snang ba tsam la rnam par gzhag ste*.

24 See ibid. 767.

25 *The Appearance of Reality* 756:

> *tshur rol mthong ba'i blo ni rang gi mtshan nyid du med pa'i phyi nang gi rten 'brel 'di mthong zhing de yang gnod med kyi dbang shes drug gi yul la rang gi mtshan nyid kyi dngos po dang yul can la ma 'khrul pa yang zhen la*.

26 For Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, *svalakṣaṇas* are the ultimate reality, genuinely cognizable through perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*, Tib. *mngon sum*) in the absence of conceptual superimpositions (Skt. *samāropa*, Tib. *sgro btags*). See p. 39 n. 18.

27 Mabja on several occasions explains that, except for the equipoise of the Āryas (Tib. *'phags pa'i mnyam bzhag*) and the "logical perspective" (Tib. *rigs shes*), absence of nature (Skt. *niḥsvabhāvatā*, Tib. *rang bzhin med pa*) in the sense of emptiness as a *paryudāsa* (Tib. *ma yin dgag*) must indeed be considered to be established in positive determination (Tib. *yongs gcod du grub pa*). See, e.g., *The Appearance of Reality* 788: *kun rdzob du rang bzhin med pa'ang yong gcod dang der snang ba dang tshogs pa'i ma yin dgag bsgrub byar byed pa yin no //*.

28 *The Appearance of Reality* 809–10:

> [The intrinsic nature] cannot be realized and meditated on by positive determination. When it is taught [that it can be so realized and cultivated] then that is in order to facilitate the beginner's partial relinquishment of afflictions. The wise, who possess the sharpest of faculties, realize the intrinsic nature through the non-implicative negation and complete non-observation of constructs (Skt. *prapañca*). By not holding in mind (Skt. *amanasikāra*, Tib. *yid la mi byed pa*) any of the marks of construction, they acquaint themselves [with the intrinsic nature] and so relinquish that holding-in-mind, which is the root of all the afflictions without exception.
>
> *de yongs gcod du rtogs pa dang bsgom pa med do // de ni las dang po pa la nyon mongs pa'i phyogs re spang ba'i phyir bstan pa yin la / dbang po mchog du gyur pa'i mkhas pa rnams kyis ni chos nyid spros pa med dgag ci yang mi dmigs pa'i tshul gyi rtogs te / spros pa'i mtshan ma cir yang yid la mi byed pa'i tshul gyis goms par byas nas nyon mongs pa thams cad kyi rtsa ba yid la byed pa mtha' dag 'gog par byed pa yin no //*.

29 In the case of an implicative negation, the presence of some phenomenon is implied by the negation itself. See p. 37 n. 1.

30 On the Indian origins and Tibetan interpretations of this bifurcation of the conventional reality, see Tauscher 1995, 241–45. Masters such as Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, who in Tibet are described as Svātantrikas, explain the relative reality along the lines of that which in Dharmakīrti's system is otherwise asserted to be ultimate. Candrakīrti's critique of *tathyasaṃvṛti* and *mithyāsaṃvṛti* is set forth in *Entering the Middle Way* VI. 25. See Tillemans 1990, n. 106.

31 Mabja follows Chapa in formulating the distinction between the mistaken and the authentic relative in this way. See Hugon 2008a, 146–47.

32 *Ornament of Reason*, 38–39:

> *de la 'jig rten gyi shes pa 'khrul pa dang ma 'khrul pa ni kha nang lta'i shes pa rang gi ngo bo myong ba'i rang rig dang / kha phyir lta gzhan rig gi shes pa la dbang po'i skyon te dbang shes drug yul la phyin ci log tu 'dzin pa'i rgyu nang dbang po dang de ma thag pa dang phyi rol yul la yod pa la sogs pa dang bral ba las skyes pa bzla ba gicg 'dzin la sogs pa ni ma 'khrul pa dang / dbang shes yul la phyin ci log tu 'jug pa'i rgyu de dag dang bcas pa las skyes pa'i shes pa bzla ba gnyis 'dzin la sogs pa ni 'khrul par bzhag ste /* (quote: Candrakīrti's *Entering the Middle Way* VI. 24) */ ces ji skad gsungs pa'o // de nyid kyis na kha nang lta rang rig gi yul nang sems dang sems las byung ba rig pa'i dngos po dang / kha chir lta dbang po drug gi shes pa ma 'khrul pa'i yul gzugs la sogs pa phyi rol don gyi dngos po gnyis yang dag kun rdzob kyi bden pa dang / dbang po drug gi shes pa*

> *'khrul pa'i yul zla gnyis kyi rnam pa la sogs pa rtog med 'khrul pa'i dmigs pa dang / bdag dang gtso bo'i rnam pa la sogs pa rtog pa'i gzung yul don spyi'i rnam pa gnyis log pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden par gzhag ste / ji skad du /* (quote: *Entering the Middle Way* VI. 25–26) *// ces gsungs so //.*

33 Ibid. 39:

> *de ltar snang bcas kyi blo la 'khrul ma 'khrul dang yul la bden rdzun du phyed pa de yang 'jig rten byis pa so so skye bo rnams kyi shes ngo na de ltar grags pas 'jig rten byis pa'i kun rdzob kyi dbang du byas pa yin cing.*

34 In his *Rebuttal of Objections* (Skt. *Vigrahavyavārtanī*), stanza 29, Nāgārjuna declares: "If I had any claim that would be my fault. Since I have no claim, I am flawless in all regards" (*yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣaḥ / nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣaḥ*). Accounting for this potentially paradoxical "claim of no claim" has been obligatory for all later Nāgārjuna interpreters. Ruegg 2000 (105–232) contains an introduction to several significant Tibetan interpretations of the issue. For a critique of Ruegg's Tibet-oriented presentation, see Oetke 2003. Westerhoff 2009a presents a contemplation from the perspective of modern analytic philosophy. English translations of the *Rebuttal of Objections* are available in Bhattacharya 1990 and Westerhoff 2010.

35 *The Appearance of Reality* 27b–d (746): *rang gzhan ltos grub yin pas rang phyogs ni // med pas gzhan phyogs yod min de yi phyir // khyod ni ci zhig 'gog nas ngal bar 'gyur //.*

36 Ibid. 25d–26a (746): *mtha' bral rten cing 'brel ba'i dbu ma'i lam // kun rdzobs tsam du ji ltar khas mi len //.*

37 *Ornament of Reason* 41–42.

38 *The Appearance of Reality* 768–78 (note the resemblance of the core stanzas of Mabja's text with the *Logic Hammer* by the latter's reported teacher, Jayānanda). Somewhat more literally, the term *vastubalapravṛtta/dngos po'i stobs zhugs* may be translated as "by the power of [real] things." Tillemans observes (1999, 28–29): "the usual or paradigmatic type of inference in Dharmakīrti is one which functions objectively, or 'by the force of real entities,' in that it can and should be evaluated purely on the basis of facts and states of affairs, and not in any way because of belief, acceptance or faith in someone or his words." While Dharmakīrti's general account of inference thus entails this principle, he does, however, also find a place for an inferential understanding that is based on merely scriptural evidence (see Tillemans 1999, 27–53).

39 *The Appearance of Reality* 768:

> *shes bya rang gis sgro ma btags su dngos po la gnas pa ltar sngar ma rtogs pa gcig myong pa dang mi 'khrul pa'i rtags las ji ltar gnas pa ltar rtogs pa la dngos po'i stobs kyis zhugs pa'am 'dzin stangs mi 'khrul pa'i tshad ma zhes bya la /.*

40 The term is introduced ibid. 10d–11a (745).

41 Ibid. 767:

> There are some Mādhyamikas who see emptiness as a mark. For them, emptiness, as the negation of any sense of personal and phenomenal self, exists as the object of rational cognition. Were it not so, they argue, the [cognition of emptiness] would be lacking a cognizable object of evaluation (Skt. *prameya*), and so it would neither be a rational cognition nor a reliable means of knowledge (Skt. *pramāṇa*). Furthermore, what is meant to be negated, namely true entities, would instead end up established. Also this position, which holds that emptiness is real, must be refuted, because as long as one harbors such attachments liberation will be impossible. Moreover, when the object [i.e. emptiness conceived of as reality] is examined logically, we do not find it, and so it can [indeed] be negated.

> *stong pa mtshan mar lta ba'i dbu ma pa kha cig gang zag dang chos kyi bdag thams cad bkag pa'i stong nyid rigs shes kyi yul na yod pa yin te / de ltar ma yin na shes bya dang gzhal bya med pas rigs shes pa dang tshad ma ma yin par 'gyur zhing dgag bya bden dngos grub par yang 'gyur ro zhes smra'o / de ltar stong nyid yang dag par 'dod pa 'di yang dgag bya yin te / de la zhen pas kyang thar pa mi thob pas dgag dgos pa'i phyir ro / yul rigs pas dpyad na mi rnyed pas dgag nus pa'i phyir ro //.*

Cf. also, ibid. 804–06. Note the resemblance between Mabja's portrayal of the *stong pa mtshan mar smra ba / lta ba* and the position that Chapa defends in his *Middle Way of the Three Easterners* (see Chapter 3.1.3 and, e.g., *Phya pa chos kyi seṅ ge* 1999: 16-22: 16–22).

42 Fl. late twelfth century. On Shakya Chokden's report, see Ruegg 2000, 38 n. 71. On Tsang-nakpa's Madhyamaka, see pp. 98–99 n. 76 and Vose 2009a.

43 See below, Chapter 3.1.3.

44 For the *pramāṇa* theorist, only unique particulars are causally efficacious (Skt. *arthakriyāsāmarthya*, Tib. *don byed nus pa*) and thus fully real (see p. 39 n. 18). Dreyfus 1997 presents a comprehensive study of the problem of universals in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist *pramāṇa* thought.

45 See Section 3.1.1.

46 Cf. *The Appearance of Reality* 778–82 and *Ornament of Reason* 43–48.

47 *Ornament of Reason* 60–62 and *The Appearance of Reality* 796–98. This argument appears also in Jayanada's *Logic Hammer* 5d–6d.

48 *The Appearance of Reality* 768:

> *gal te de lta bu'i tshad ma zhig yod na ni rtags kyi tshul des grub pas bsgrub bya dngos po la mtha' gcig du nges pa bsgrub pa rang rgyud ki rtags 'thad cing / rtags las 'ongs pa'i blo dngos po'i stobs kyi tshad ma yang 'thad la / dgag sgrub thams cad des byed par yang rigs pa zhig na tshad ma de lta bu ni dpyad na tha snyad du'ang mi 'thad pas 'di dag thams cad gyi na'o //.*

49 Cf. *Ornament of Reason* 44.

50 *The Appearance of Reality* 783.

51 According to *pramāṇa* theorists such as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, all consciousness is by nature self-aware, in the sense that each moment of mind is intrinsically aware of itself and its contents without having to rely on any other knower. Self-awareness is hence both enumerated as a particular type of non-conceptual (Skt. *nirvikalpa*, Tib. *rtog med*) perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*, Tib. *mngon sum*), as well as seen as the self-illumination (Tib. *rang gsal*) that is the characteristic mark of all that is mind. For a concise presentation of this principle in *pramāṇa* theory, see Keira 2004 39–43 n. 75. For a study of its origins and devlopment in Buddhist thought upto its classical formulations, see Yao 2005.

52 Cf. *Ornament of Reason*:

> In the context of the relative, definitive proofs and refutations are used from the perspective of the Middle Way follower. However, such proofs and refutations are established merely through the reliable means of cognition acknowledged by the other side. Unequivocal and definitive ascertainments by the power of facts, including consequential reversals, do not occur even relatively.

> *kun rdzob tu dbu ma pa rang gi blo ngor mtha' gcig tu nges pa bsgrub pa dang / 'gag pa 'phen pa'ang yod mod kyi de pha rol la grags pa'i tshad ma tsam gyis grub pa yin gyi / dngos po'i stobs zhugs gyis grub pa'i mtha' gcig tu nges pa dang / bzlog pa 'phang pa ni kun rdzob tsam tu yang med pas rang rgyud dang sgrub byed 'phen pa'i thal 'gyur du mi 'gyur ba shes par bya'o //.*

53 Cf. *The Appearance of Reality* 796: *chos gang yang dpyad na nges pa kun rdzob tu yang mi 'dod*.

54 Any attempt at purging philosophy of metaphysics can, as the twentieth century has shown, arguably itself been seen as metaphysical, and relinquishing metaphysics is therefore a project that may be charged with contradiction. Nevertheless, Mabja denounces all efforts at grounding knowledge in anything beyond the merely apparent, and he moreover explicitly rejects any attempt at turning "mere appearance" (Tib. *snang tsam*) into an undeniable *given*. Hence, if we want to determine metaphysical commitments in Mabja's Madhyamaka, we may want to see such commitments as defined in terms of their own insubstantiality and transparency.

55 We may here further note that Mabja's approach does not easily facilitate the import of any of the traditionally enumerated three non-Madhyamaka tenet systems to account for the *saṃvṛtisatya*. Whereas Vaibhāṣikas posit a *pratītyasamutpāda* that bears characteristics such as arising and cessation, Mabja's dependent origination can conventionally be determined as displaying the properties of precisely the absence of such characteristics. Likewise, while Sautrāntikas of the Dharmakīrtian orientation draw a sharp distinction between imagined endurance and impermanent reality, Mabja at one point grants the same ontological status to the lasting and the momentary (see p. 21). Finally, Mabja sees, as one might expect given his Candrakīrtian inspiration, mind and matter to be on an equal phenomenological footing, hence precluding any conventional alignment with a Cittamātra system.

56 A "triply characterized" (Skt. *trairūpya*, Tib. *tshul gsum*) argument is the Dharmakīrtian model of a properly constructed argument. The authenticity of a proposed proof is here determined through testing for 1) the relation of the evidence (Skt. *liṅga*, Tib. *rtags*) to the subject of the argument (Skt. *pakṣa*, Tib. *phyogs*) (Skt. *pakṣadharmatā*, Tib. *phyogs chos*) and 2–3) the forward and reverse entailment or "pervasion" (Skt. *anvayavyāpti*/*vyatirekavyāpti*, Tib. *rjes 'gro*/*ldog khyab*) between the evidence and the predicate (Skt. *sādhyadharma*, Tib. *bsgrub bya'i chos*). Thus (Tillemans 1999, 89):

> Buddhist epistemologists have generally held that a reason is valid when it satisfies three characteristics (*rūpa*): (a) the *pakṣadharmatā*, the fact that the reason qualifies the subject (*pakṣa*, *dharmin*); (b) the *anvayavyāpti*, or the reason's occurring in only "similar instances" (*sapakṣa*); (c) the *vyatirekavyāpti*, or the reason's complete absence from the "dissimilar instances" (*vipakṣa*).

In the Tibetan literature on argumentation (Tib. *rtags rigs*) such a proof is often exemplified as follows: "The hill (subject) possesses fire (predicate) because it has smoke (evidence)." Basically, since in this case the evidence pertains to the subject (smoke is seen on the hill), and since moreover the evidence entails the predicate (wherever there is smoke there is also fire), and since, finally, the negation of the predicate entails the negation of the evidence (wherever fire is absent there is no smoke), one can conclude that the argument is genuine. On the development of the understanding of the *trairūpya* in India and Tibet, see Tillemans 1999, 89–116, Tillemans 2005 and Hugon 2004. For an introductory discussion of the structure of inference according to Indian *pramāṇa* thought, see Dunne 2004, 25–35.

57 Cf. *Ornament of Reason* 43 (a similar passage occurs in *The Appearance of Reality* 781):

> Inference uses proof featuring the triple characteristic to bring about a realization of that which is not evident. One type of inference provides conventional affirmations. Based on the three types of proof, one may realize that, for example, there are minds other than one's own, that conditioned things are impermanent, or that there are phenomena devoid of self. Hence, it excludes the extreme belief that such things do not exist even conventionally. Another kind of inference performs nega-

tions in terms of reality. Through proofs, such as the absence of one and many, one may realize, for example, that there is no real establishment for any of the conceptually constructed marks. This form of inference eliminates the extreme superimposition that phenomena exist in reality.

rjes dpag ni / tshul gsum pa'i rtags las lkog tu gyur pa'i don rtogs pa ste / de yang rtags gsum la brten nas rgyud gzhan gyi blo dang 'dus ma byas mi rtag pa dang chos bdag med par rtogs pa lta bu tha snyad du sgrub par byed pa'i rjes dpag gis de dag tha snyad du yang med pa'i mtha' sel la / gcig du bral la sogs pa'i rtags las yang dag par spros pa'i mtshan ma gang du'ang grub pa med par rtogs pa lta bu yang dag par dgag pa byed pa'i rjes dpag gis chos rnams yang dag par yod pa sgro 'dogs kyi mtha' sel ba yin no //.

58 Chapter 2.1.4.
59 *Ornament of Reason* 43 (cf. *The Appearance of Reality* 780):

> As explained above, the triple characteristic (Skt. *trairūpya*) of a proof involved in such inferences cannot reasonably be due to the power of facts that are established for both parties. There is no such proof that can establish autonomously the truth of the position that one seeks to prove. Therefore, the proofs, here, are consequential and the three characteristics are accepted, either explicitly or implicitly, by the other party [alone] (Skt. *paraprasiddha*). Likewise, the type of mind that ensues from such proofs is inferential in so far as it is acknowledged as such by the opposing party.
>
> *de'i rtags rnams tshul gsum gnyi ga la dngos po stobs zhugs kyis bsgrub bya rang phyogs bden par 'jog par rang rgyud du ma 'thad par sngar bshad pa zin pas tshul gsum pha rol gyis khas blangs pa'am khas blangs kyi mthar thug pa thal 'gyur gyi rtags dang rtags las 'ong pa'i blo pha rol la grags pa'i rjes su dpag pa yin no //.*

60 Ibid. 43 (Cf. *The Appearance of Reality* 780):

> When unexamined, these arguments may appear to be established by reliable means of cognition, yet upon investigation, [it is seen that] that [only] in dependence on the claims of the other side [can] the mind grasping the evidence [be said to produce] a reliable means of cognition that apprehends in way that is free from delusion.
>
> *ma dpyad na tshad mas grub pa ltar snang yang dpyad na rtags 'dzin gyi blo 'dzin stang mi 'khrul pa'i tshad mar pha rol gyi khas blangs la ltos pa'o //.*

61 *The Appearance of Reality* 778–79.
62 Chapters 2.2.2–4. See particularly 2.2.4, where we consider Mabja's distinction between "genuine theses" (Tib. *rnal ma'i dam bca'*) and theses that are mere superimposition (Tib. *sgro btags kyi dam bca'*). The former concerns relative and the latter ultimate states of affairs.
63 Cf. *Root of the Middle Way* XXIV. 10.
64 *The Appearance of Reality* 789:

> *ji ltar snang ba 'di gcig dang du ma bral ba'i phyir rang bzhin med do zhes blo 'di la ldog pa gnyis te / yongs gcod du snang la rang bzhin med pa ma yin dgag rtogs pa dang / rnam bcad la bden pa'i rang bzhin khegs pa'o / dang po ni tshul gsum rtags las bsgrub bya rtogs pa' rjes dpag yin la / de'i dus yul kun rdzob yin pas blo tha snyad pa yin no / gnyis pa ni dpyad pa'i blos spros pa khegs pa yin pas blo rigs shes yin la yul spros pa med dgag don dam pa'i bden pa yin no //.*

65 See Hugon (forthcoming).
66 On the implications of Chapa's *pramāṇa* definition, "realization of what is true/real" (Tib. *bden pa rtogs pa*), see Hugon 2011 and Stolz 2009.

67 Let us note that, while generally accepting the *pramāṇa* theorist technical framework, Mabja denies, in the context of the Mādhyamika's refutations, the otherwise standard requirement of reverse entailment (Skt. *vyatireka*, Tib. *ldog khyab*). See *The Appearance of Reality* 796–97 (an almost identical passage occurs at *Ornament of Reason* 58):

> In the context of a refutation based on analysis [in terms of the true nature of things] it suffices merely to notice the pervasion of the evidence in the concordant factors. It is, therefore, easy to establish entailment with respect to the evidence that appears in the scriptures [of the Middle Way].
>
> *dpyad nas 'gog pa'i skabs su rtags rnams kyis khyab pa mthun pa'i phyogs la mthong ba tsam gyis chog par bstan pa 'dis gzhung rnam nas 'byung ba'i rtags rnams ni khyab pa bsgrub la bar 'gyur ro //.*

This, however, does not prevent Mabja from, in the *Ornament of Reason*, repeatedly demonstrating the reverse entailment of Nāgārjuna's arguments.

68 Cf. *The Appearance of Reality* 767: 804–06.

69 Ibid. 789:

> *rigs shes dang ldog pa tha dad kyang rjes dpag gi stobs kyis sgro 'dogs chod pa yin pas rigs shes rje dpag tshad mar gzhag go*.

70 Ibid. 788:

> *rigs shes la gzhal bya dang yul yongs gcod myed pas tshad ma dang shes pa mtshan nyid pa ma yin par thal ba ni 'dod pa yin la*.

71 *Ornament of Reason* 178 (commentary to *Root of the Middle Way* XV. 2):

> *slob dpon nyid kyis kyang / me yi rang bzhin tsha ba dang / bu ram rang bzhin mngar ba ltar / de bzhin chos rnam thams cad kyi / rang bzhin stong pa nyid du 'dod / ces gsung pa yin no / sngar chos rnam la rang rang gi rang bzhin med par dang yang mi 'gal te / chos rnam de kho na nyid du rang bzhin ci yang grub pa med par gnas pa la de dag gi rang bzhin stong pa nyid yin no zhes sgro btags nas bstan par zad kyi de yod med la sogs pa shes bya'i chos su grub par mkhas ma blangs pa'i phyir ro //.*

72 Ibid. 49:

> *dbu ma pa'i tshul la don dam par dgag sgrub kyi dam bca' gang yang med mod kyi / kho bo cag gis kyang dgag sgrub kyi dam bca' gang yang byas pa med la / kun rdzob tsam du 'dir skabs su bab pa rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam dang / spyir yongs gcod sgrub pa'i dam bca' yang byas mod kyi /.*

73 Ibid. 49–50:

> *de la'ang chos rnam kun rdzob tu snang la rang bzhin med pa sgyu ma lta bu yin zhes pa la sogs pa kun rdzob pa'i yul dang / chos rnam don dam par skye ba med pa'am / spros pa dang bral ba dang / khas len thams cad dang bral ba yin no zhes pa la sogs pa lta bu don dam pa'i yul la kun rdzob du dam bca' byed pa gnyis las / dang po ni / de ltar zhe bas 'dod pas dam bca' mtshan nyid pa yin la / gnyis pa ni / dgag sgrub kyi spros pa gang gi yang ngo bor ma grub par gnas pa la skye ba la sogs par yod par 'dod pa'i log rtog gsal bar 'dod nas skye ba med pa la sogs pa'i ming gis sgro btags nas bstan pa yin pas sgro btags kyi dam bca' yin gyi / don dam par skye ba dang spros pa dang khas len la sogs pa bkag pa'i mtshan ma tsam du yang zhe bas mi 'dod pas de dgag pa'i dam bca' mtshan nyid pa ma yin pa'i phyir don dam par dgag sgrub kyi dam bca' med par bstan pa dang mi 'gal bar shes par bya'o //.*

74 See *The Appearance of Reality* 755–56.
75 Chapters 2.1.2 and 2.1.4.
76 We have hence also noted that Mabja (*The Appearance of Reality* 809–10) qualifies his account of empirical *śunyatā* cognition with the words:

> [*Dharmatā*] cannot be realized and cultivated by positive determination. When it is taught [that it can be so realized and cultivated] then that is in order to facilitate the beginner's partial relinquishment of afflictions.

> *De yongs gcod du rtogs pa dang bsgom pa med do / de ni las dang po pa la nyon mongs pa'i phyogs re spang ba'i phyir bstan pa yin la /.*

77 See, e.g., ibid. 762–63.
78 Also in his treatment of the "object of negation" (Tib. *dgag bya*) Mabja may be providing an important conceptual framework for Tsongkhapa's later discussion. See, e.g., ibid. 762: *dgag bya dngos ma bzung bar ni dgag par mi nus te*. . . .
79 *The Appearance of Reality* 763 and 818.
80 *The Appearance of Reality* 814:

> *don dam pa'i bden pa ni shes brjod gzhal bya' spros pa las 'das pa dang kun rdzob kyi bden pa dpyad na rang gi mtshan nyid du med par sngar bshad pa'i tshul gyis snang bcas kyi blo'i yul thams cad brdzun pa dang blo thams cad 'khrul par grub pas na ji lta ji snyed yul du byed pa'i snang bcas kyi blo mnga' na 'khrul snang ma spangs par 'gyur ba'i phyir ro //.*

81 See p. 17.
82 See *The Appearance of Reality* 813–19. Let us, however, notice that Mabja distinguishes his own position from certain "others," who hold that only the *dharmakāya* is the genuine fruition. See *The Appearance of Reality* 817:

> *'dir kha cig chos 'di pa'i lugs kyis tshogs gnyis rdzogs pa'i 'bras bu ni chos kyi sku kho na yin la gzugs sku ni gdul bya'i ngo na snang ba tsam yin gyi sangs rgyas rnal ma ma yin zhes gsungs pa ni legs par mi sems ste /.*

For Mabja (ibid.),

> Buddhahood is accomplished within the inseparability of abidance in *dharmakāya* for the benefit of oneself, and appearance of the *rūpakāyas* for the benefit of others. Likewise, these two are taught as the distinct results of having gathered the accumulations of wisdom and merit.

> *rang don chos sku la gnas pa dang gzhan don gzugs skur snang ba gnyis dbyer med par sangs rgyas yin pa'i phyir dang / de gnyis ye shes kyi tshogs dang bsod nam kyi tshogs las so sor 'byung bar gsung pa'i phyir ro //.*

83 Ibid. 810:

> *gal te byis pa'i mnyam par gzhag pas chos nyid spyi'i tshul gyis yul du byed pa yin pas rtog med kyi shes pa ma zhi zhing kun du 'od tu rgyu spangs pas shes pa tsam yang med do zhes rigs su chug mod / sa bcu'am mnyam bzhag na rig pa'i rgyun ma zhi na spros bcas su gyur la / zhi na rgyu spangs par 'gyur ro zhe na / di la kha cig dag kha phyir lta'i snang ba zhi zhing nang ltar rang rig tsam yod pas nyes pa gnyis ka med pa nyid do / de tsam yang med na rjes shes rgyu med du dang / goms byed blo med pas mnyam bzhag goms par mi rung ba dang / sa brgyad pa yan chad du mnyam bzhag rjes shes zung 'jug tu yod par bshad pa mi 'thad par 'gyur ro zhes /.*

On self-awareness, see p. 42 n. 51.
84 See p. 40 n. 28.
85 *The Appearance of Reality* 810: *'gag ma 'gag su dpyad na kun rdzob tu yang mi 'thad mod*.

86 See Chapter 2.2.4.
87 See p. 17.
88 *The Appearance of Reality* 756:

> *blo des shes bya ji ltar rnyed pa'i tshul yang ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po 'di nyid dngos po dang dngos po med pa la sogs par bden pa ni shin tu yang mi dmigs mod kyi tha na snang tsam du yang mi gzigs pas na ci'i ngo bor yang grub pa med pa'i tshul gyis mthong pa yin no //.*

89 Elaborating on *Root of the Middle Way* XVIII. 5, Mabja hence reflects (*Ornament of Reason* 207):

> What then it is it that brings an end to action (*karma*) and affliction? Well, action and affliction cease through the cessation of that which causes them. And as already explained, action and affliction are due to incorrect thinking, apprehending a self and something that belongs to it, etc. These thoughts are in turn due to "construction" (Tib. *spros pa*), which translates the Sanskrit *prapañca*. The term has several meanings, but in the present context it refers to the mental construction that is associated with the apprehending of marks (Skt. *nimitta*, Tib. *mtshan ma*). Thus it implies the construction of something that cognizes, something that is cognized, something signified, something that signifies, etc. All such proliferating constructs stem from a construction of marks to which the mind has been accustomed since beginningless time. By becoming familiar with the view that sees the natural emptiness of all these constructed phenomena of mind and cognized objects, all of it is, however, brought to an end.

> *'o na las dang nyon mongs pa de dag gang gis 'dzad pa 'gyur zhe na / de yang rgyu 'dzad pa'i sgo nas te 'di ltar las dang nyong mongs 'di ni sngar bshad pa ltar bdag dang bdag gir 'dzin pa la sogs pa tshul bzhin ma yin par rtog pa las 'byung la / rnam rtog de dag spros pa pra ban dza zhes pa skabs kyis du ma la 'jug pa las 'dir shes pa dang shes bya brjod bya dang rjod byed la sogs pa mtshan mar 'dzin pa'i spros pa sna tshogs pa las 'byung la kun gyi rtsa ba thog ma med nas goms pa'i mtshan ma'i spros pa ni spro bya'i shes pa dang shes bya'i chos thams cad rang bzhin stong pa nyid lta ba goms pa nyid kyis 'gags pa 'gyur la /.*

90 Cf. ibid. 30: *blo de'i ngo na rten 'brel de nyid snang ba'i mtshan ma'ang zhi ba'i rang bzhin du gnas pas rten 'brel de nyid la'ang zhi ba zhes bya'o*.
91 Cf. p. 24.

3 Teachers and heirs

A historical perspective

Having explored and interpreted the structure and dynamics of Mabja's Madhyamaka project, we should by now be in a position from which we, with sufficient sensitivity, can undertake a transparent analysis of the history of his ideas. From where did Mabja receive the conceptual tools for his program of reformed, Candrakīrtian *pramāṇa* thought? And, once developed, how did his declared epistemology fare? What evidence do we have of the repercussions of his claims to a robust and multifaceted epistemology, all applied within a fallibilist and largely antimetaphysical atmosphere? By taking notice of features that bear the marks of Mabja's Madhyamaka in the works of scholars who preceded or came after him, we will, in the following, attempt to provide a transparent account of the emergence and development of Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka in Tibet.

We begin by considering Mabja in relation to his primary sources of inspiration and/or (for at times they are appear to have been both) intellectual counterparts. Having thus noticed certain central themes that emerge in Tibetan Madhyamaka interpretation during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we will subsequently examine Mabja's influence on a selection of paradigmatic representatives of the later schools of Buddhism in Tibet.

3.1 Sources of influence

3.1.1 Patsab Nyima Drakpa

It is a curious fact that, while we have little evidence of any significant impact of Candrakīrti on later Indian philosophers,[1] his importance for Tibetan Mahāyāna exegesis from the twelfth century onwards can hardly be underestimated. Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü is, as we have noted, among the first to rely on the *Clear Words* and *Entering the Middle Way* as the central intellectual framework for comprehending the intent of Nāgārjuna and the *Prajnāpāramitā-sūtras*. The transmission of these Candrakīrti works Mabja receives, according to sources,[2] from the translator Patsab and the Kashmiri *paṇḍita*, Jayānada, who is visiting Tibet. Since also Patsab's lineage of transmission takes us directly to Kashmir, we may follow Dreyfus[3] and Lang[4] in suggesting that a Candrakīrti-inspired Madhyamaka, or, if

we want, a *Prāsaṅgika approach (Tib. *thal 'gyur ba'i lugs*), was flourishing in at least that part of the Indic Himalayas prior to its dramatic entry onto the Tibetan stage. Such a conjecture is, as Dreyfus shows,[5] supported by the fact that the *Illuminating Lamp* (a text attributed to Patsab that contains our earliest examples of the word *thal 'gyur ba* used in reference to a specific Madhyamaka school aligned with Candrakīrti)[6] in its colophon purports to be "an account of the approach taught by the paṇdita Hasumati."[7] The latter scholar is, we may surmise, none other than the Hasumati with whom Patsab studied and translated during his years in Kashmir.

The attribution of the *Illuminating Lamp* to Patsab is based on a curious "correction" that appears on the title page of the manuscript. The actual title, which reads, "*The Madhyamaka Commentary by the Master Candrakīrti*" (Tib. *slob dpon zla grags pas mdzad pa'i dbu ma'i 'grel pa*), is followed by a short note that quite bluntly specifies that, "this is not by Candrakīrti but by Patsab." It is hard to surmise when and under which circumstances this note was entered.

Now, if the attribution of the *Illuminating Lamp* to Patsab is correct, it gives us good reason to wonder why Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü would become known to posterity as one of the former's great sons,[8] because the views espoused in this treatise contrast sharply with what we know to be Mabja's own position. Thus, on the issue of reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *tshad ma*), the *Illuminating Lamp* persistently argues along the following lines:

> I do not accept any reliable means of cognition, because such means and the object evaluated by them are both refuted in the *Rebuttal of Objections* (Skt. *Vigrahavyāvartanī*), and because, furthermore, reliable means of cognition would require the existence of an object to be evaluated and such an object does not exist. It may be objected: "There are two issues: 1) evaluation by conventional reliable means of cognition in accordance with what is accepted [in the world] and 2) ultimate evaluation." Yet that is untenable, because given that the allegedly conventional reliable means of cognition is held to be reliable (Skt. *pramā*) with respect to the object it realizes, it cannot be impaired by any other reliable means of cognition, and so it turns out to be ultimate [rather than conventional]. Hence, a division in terms of means of cognition being either conventionally or ultimately reliable does not hold.[9] Rather, anything at all that may be held to be a reliable means of cognition will turn out to be ultimate, and therefore, since there are no reliable means of cognition at all, I do not accept any either.[10]

For the *Illuminating Lamp*'s author, the notion of reliable means of cognition is simply antithetical to the Madhyamaka point of view. While such means are held to lead to a proper cognition, or "realization" (Tib. *rtogs pa*), of their objects (Skt. *artha*, Tib. *don*), there are, for the Madhyamaka, no real objects. Any appeal to the notion of accurate cognition of objects is therefore nonsensical, regardless of whether it is thought of in ultimate terms (as the realist does it) or as mere

convention (in the way of the Svātantrika).[11] Compare this account with Mabja's description of the following flawed position, which is the second "extreme" that he delineates on this issue in the *Ornament of Reason*:

> Others take a different position, basing their view on the following statement:
>
> If I were to have a thesis,
> Then that would be my flaw.
> Yet since I have no thesis,
> I am flawless in all regards.[12]
>
> This is interpreted to mean that, since followers of the Middle Way do not accept any view at all, there are no reliable means of cognition that prove such a view, either. Instead, the follower of the Middle Way refutes all extreme beliefs as held by others through showing the consequences of the internal contradictions in their claims.[13]

The mistaken approach that Mabja here delineates, and otherwise objects to so strongly in both *Ornament of Reason* and *The Appearance of Reality*, is indeed very closely resemblant of, if not identical with, the view of the *Illuminating Lamp*. Moreover, the relevance and status of reliable means of knowledge in the Madhyamaka is, as we have seen, an issue that goes to the heart of Mabja's epistemology, and the *Illuminating Lamp* similarly makes this the basis for distinguishing genuine Madhyamaka (i.e. the Prāsaṅgika) from the flawed (Svātantrika). Therefore, if the view expressed in the *Illuminating Lamp* is in fact Patsab's, we must conclude that there are pervasive and significant differences between the approaches of the alleged master and disciple.[14]

That Patsab and Mabja did in fact in this way disagree in matters of epistemology may be seen to be supported by an annotation to the *The Appearance of Reality*. In Mabja's text an unnamed opponent questions the coherence of first refuting reliable means of cognition and then next seeking to reintroduce them in the context of the conventional truth. If, the objection runs, one were to say that even the Prāsaṅgikas (Tib. *thal ba pa*) accept conventional *pramāṇa*, there would be no difference between them and the Svātantrikas.[15] In the annotation (the authorship of which is unknown),[16] the voice of the objector is identified as that of "the translator" (Tib. *lo tsā ba*). Since apparently no other name is required, we might surmise that the reference is to the translator of Candrakīrti's treatises. The fact that this objector refers to the followers of Candrakīrti as Prāsaṅgikas (Tib. *thal ba pa*) is also noteworthy, for, while Mabja himself never does so, the *Illuminating Lamp* differentiates Prāsaṅgikas (Tib. *thal 'gyur pa*) from Svātantrikas throughout.

However, if a close disciple of Patsab developed a position that on central matters was diametrically opposed[17] to Patsab's own it seems likely that at least some of our sources would have noted the presence of such disagreement (just as for example Shönnu Pal noted Mabja's preference for Jayānanda's approach

rather than that of Chapa).[18] Nevertheless, among the sources that see Patsab and Mabja as master and disciple we find a striking congruence in their portrayal of Mabja as a close disciple, if not "son," of Patsab, without any indication of their views being different. Perhaps there is, on these grounds alone, reason to doubt the attribution of the *Illuminating Lamp* to Patsab. Alternatively, if the latter text is indeed by Patsab, we might want to see Patsab and Mabja as more distantly related than in the case of a direct master-and-disciple connection, just as is, for example, the case according to Nyang-ral Nyimay Ozer.[19]

Let us in this context also recall that Rongtön[20] and Gorampa[21] ascribe to Patsab a less uncompromising view. They explain that for Patsab the Mādhyamika's "holding no claims" indicated the absence of any thesis established by positive determination (Tib. *yongs bcod sgrub pa'i dam bca*) and that according to him it ought therefore not be understood as a denial of theses in the sense of mere negative elimination (Tib. *rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca*). Jamyang Shepay Dorje[22] similarly expresses the opinion that Patsab himself did not wholly reject any sense of a view that is the Madhyāmika's own, and Śākya Chokden in fact sees Mabja's entire *pramāṇa* doctrine as an exposition of "the verbal nectar of Patsab Lotsāwa."[23] Now these authors may have had a number reasons for ascribing a less *pramāṇa*-hostile position to Patsab,[24] and even if they are simply reporting a received account, this will obviously not allow us to conclude anything beyond simply the existence of such an account. Yet the fact that they all see Patsab's position as less categorical than what we find in the *Illuminating Lamp* could also be taken as evidence in support of an attribution of the latter text to someone else than Patsab. Perhaps, we might then propose, its author received "the approach taught by the *paṇḍita* Hasumati"[25] from either Patsab or another teacher of the new Madhyamaka texts, and so wrote the *Illuminating Lamp* in response.

Finally, it seems to me that also the flow of the argumentation delivered in the text gives us some reason to doubt whether the *Illuminating Lamp* was directly authored by Patsab. In short, the text features occasionally a certain crudeness and lack of technical sophistication, which has nothing to do with the philosophical stance that the text assumes and which I cannot help contrasting with the generally high quality and attention to detail that is otherwise evinced in Patsab's Candrakīrti translations.[26] Even if the views that the text expresses are generally his, this might suggest that the text does not come directly from Patsab's hand.

Whatever the identity of its author may be, and despite its sweeping rejection of *pramāṇa*, the *Illuminating Lamp* does nevertheless display a central affinity with Mabja's approach, because the text sees a deep and decisive difference in the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika approaches. According to both Mabja and the *Illuminating Lamp*, Svātantrikas fail miserably, because in their eagerness to establish the truth of emptiness they end up reifying both the ultimate and relative truths.

3.1.2 Jayānanda

Jayānanda is the only known Indian commentator on Candrakīrti's *Entering the Middle Way*[27] and in Tibet he appears to have been among the primary catalysts

for the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika exegetical split.[28] Jayānanda's *Logic Hammer* launches a frontal attack on the notion of fact-based *pramāṇa* and, as its words echo clearly in the *The Appearance of Reality*,[29] there can be no doubt that this text was a strong influence for Mabja. If considered separately, the *Logic Hammer's* negative critique could be taken as a rejection of the very idea of reliable means of cognition, just as we see it in the *Illuminating Lamp*. Jayānanda's commentary to *Entering the Middle Way*, however, makes it apparent that for him it is not the concept of reliable means of cognition as such that is problematic, but rather a certain misconstrual of such means, and in this way his critique of reliable means of cognition is hence very different from what we find in the *Illuminating Lamp*. A passage with which Tsongkhapa is later to take issue[30] is relevant in this regard. Jayānanda here anticipates an objection to the idea that the Madhyamaka arguments for emptiness are mere *reductio ad absurdum* (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*), and that they hence are established only from the perspective of the opposition:

> Objection: "If the argument is held to be a consequence (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*), is that argument then established by reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *tshad ma*)? If it is, the argument would be established for both [parties in the debate], and how can you then claim that it is accepted by the opponent [only]? If on the other hand it were not established by reliable means of cognition, the argument would not be worthy of being accepted by the opposition, and how can you then say that it is accepted by them?"[31]

For the objector, a genuine argument must be founded on *pramāṇa*s, because otherwise it would not be worthy of acceptance (Tib. *khas len mi 'os pa*). Once such reliable means of cognition are involved, however, it becomes meaningless to say that the argument is a mere *reductio* that does not involve any commitment on behalf of the Mādhyamika. Jayānanda replies:

> I am not convinced that, "that which is established by reliable means of cognition is established for both [of the debating parties]." When the [Mādhyamika] opponent sets forth a proof, is the advanced argument then established by a reliable means of cognition? How could one know whether it is so for the other [party in the debate], because the particularities of the minds of others are neither the object of perception nor of inference. Moreover, how could one know whether it is so in one's own case? Having for a long time been affected by the causes of delusion, oneself is deceived and mislead. Therefore, the opponent and defendant accept the nature of things by the force of *that which they accept as*[32] reliable means of cognition. Thus it is reasonable [to say] that when one refutes the other, the refutation is in terms of [mere] acceptance.[33]

When Mādhyamikas and realists debate, they do so, argues Jayānanda, based on that which to them comes across as reliable means. Yet such *pramāṇas* can by no

means be ascribed any foundational role, for it is clear that they are merely apparent. For Jayānanda, we do not need to resort to any ultimate analysis of things to see that the findings of such means of cognition cannot be thought of as flawless or unquestionable. In what follows we find further links to Mabja's *pramāṇa* critique:

> Moreover, for those who adhere to autonomous arguments (Skt. *svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*) it is when the entailment (Skt. *vyāpti*, Tib. *khyab pa*) between the reason (Skt. *hetu*, Tib. *gtan tshigs*) and the *probandum* (Skt. *sādhya*, Tib. *bsgrub bya*) is established through reliable means of cognition that one speaks of an autonomous proof (Skt. *svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*). Such an entailment is, however, not established. The reason is as follows. The reliable means of cognition that would establish an entailment are perception and inference, yet perception, for one, does not provide any establishment. Although [looking] at the stove one realizes, by means of perception and non-observation, a presence of smoke when there is fire and an absence of it when there is none, [such a realization] does not pertain to all locations (Tib. *yul thams cad la yod pa ma yin*).
>
> Secondly, inference cannot establish the entailment either, because it pertains to definite locations. That is to say, one does not draw any inference about *all* locations, because it is exclusively where there is a reason that is taken to pertain to the *probandum* that one cognizes impermanence, etc. The cognition does not involve all times and locations. Therefore, the entailment is established merely as per the claims of mundane beings – not through reliable means of cognition. Why would it then not make sense to say that the positions of others are refuted by means of consequential arguments (Skt. **prasaṅgahetu*, Tib. *thal 'gyur gyi gtan tshigs*)?[34]

For Jayānanda, *pramāṇa*s cannot provide us with any conclusions that are of incontestable, universal relevance. Neither perception nor inference can have any definite bearing beyond the specific context, because the necessary entailment (Skt. *vyāpti*, Tib. *khyab pa*) that would allow such generalization cannot be achieved. For this reason, Jayānanda explains, logical arguments should not be construed as autonomous (Skt. *svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*) but instead seen as consequences (Skt. **prasaṅgahetu*, Tib. *thal 'gyur gyi gtan tshigs*) that hold simply from the perspective of the world. Mabja's epistemology, and in particular his critique of entailment, are clearly related to these ideas. Mabja acknowledges this quite explicitly, for he echoes, as already noted, verses from the *Logic Hammer* in his *The Appearance of Reality*, and Mabja's critique of universals (specifically the notion of a "single conceptual distinction," Tib. *ldog pa gcig pu*) and their relation to the principle of logical entailment (Skt. *anvaya*, Tib. *khyab pa*), which is crucial to Mabja's epistemology, likewise centers on a passage from the *Logic Hammer*.[35]

Now, in the passage from his *Entering the Middle Way* – commentary cited

above – Jayānanda explains to us that an argument's entailment is established "merely as per the claims of mundane beings" and hence "not through reliable means of cognition." Mabja, on the other hand, would probably rather refrain from such a formulation that creates a tension between *pramāṇa* and the beliefs of the world, because for him reliable means of cognition rightly belong to precisely the unexamined perspective of the world. Nevertheless, despite Jayānanda's phrasing in the passage just cited, and despite his sweeping charges in the *Logic Hammer*, it is apparent that for him there is a sense in which the notion of *pramāṇa* is both innocent and useful. This becomes clear in, for example, his elaborate treatment of the authority of scripture (Skt. *āgama*, Tib. *lung*), which he discusses by means of the Dharmakīrtian paradigm of "a scripture that is [found to be] pure under threefold examination" (Tib. *dpyad pa gsum gyis dag pa'i lung*).[36] As a criterion for the establishment of scriptural authority based on 1) perception, 2) inference, and 3) the exclusion of intra-textual contradictions, this paradigm is at the backbone of Dharmakīrtian *pramāṇa* theory. Like Mabja, also Jayānanda has no qualms about citing Dharmakīrti in support of his Madhyamaka epistemology,[37] and in the passage in question Jayananda elaborates, over several pages, on the undeceiving (Skt. *avisaṃvādaka*, Tib. *mi bslu ba*) character of that which, as he repeatedly wishes to specify, must be classified as a reliable means of cognition in reliance on the world (Tib. *'jig rten pa'i rjes su 'brang nas tshad ma*). If, based on a principle of charity, we exclude the possibility of blatant and repeated contradiction, we must then conclude that, for Jayānanda, mundane reliable means of cognition (Tib. *'jig rten pa'i tshad ma*) have a meaningful role to play in Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka.[38] It is not unlikely that Mabja saw his epistemology as a natural extension of Jayānanda's general stance.[39]

Let us here finally notice that also Mabja's assertion of a Buddhahood that transcends appearance/experience (Tib. *snang ba*) is in line with Jayānanda's *ṭīkā*. Since, Jayānanda argues, all appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) is based on ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*, Tib. *ma rig pa*), even the illusion-like dependent origination, known as "the mere relative" (Skt. *saṃvṛtimātra*, Tib. *kun rdzob tsam*), which is otherwise perceived by the *āryas* during their "subsequent attainment" (Skt. *pṛṣṭhalabdha*, Tib. *rjes thob*), could not possibly appear to the Buddha. As he explains:

> Here there are two types of obscuration, because there is afflictive as well as non-afflictive ignorance. Afflictive ignorance is that which causes engagement with the continuum of cyclic existence, whereas non-afflictive ignorance is the cause of the appearance of form, etc.
>
> In the case of the Transcendent Conquerors, neither of these obscurations obtain. Therefore, cyclic existence as well as form and so forth do for them not appear, because where there is no cause there will not be any effect. How, then, could there for them be any appearance of the mere relative (Skt. *saṃvṛtimātra*, Tib. *kun rdzob tsam*)?[40]

3.1.3 Chapa Chökyi Seng-ge

The Tibetan translator Khu Dodebar worked on a number of Indian treatises together with Jayānanda (including the latter's own *Logic Hammer*), and Mabja was, according to Shönnu Pal, a student of both of these teachers.[41] In the absence of any extant work by Dodebar it is, however, hard to surmise the extent of his influence on Mabja's Madhyamaka thought.

On the other hand, according to a number of sources Mabja had, before his contact with any of the teachers of the "new Madhyamaka" transmitted into Tibet in the beginning of the second millennium, already become an accomplished student of the great Chapa Chökyi Seng-ge.[42] This abbot of Sangphu monastery was a staunch opponent of Candrakīrti, and Chapa had, if we take Śākya Chokden's word for it,[43] once met and defeated Jayānanda in debate. Chapa's *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* likewise contains a lengthy refutation of Candrakīrti.[44] If Mabja indeed was the one among Chapa's students known as "the lion of debate" (Tib. *rtsod pa'i seng ge*), his later turn towards Candrakīrti must certainly have created some waves.

Whatever the historical events may have been, Chapa's influence on Mabja is both strong and complex. In the *The Appearance of Reality* and *Ornament of Reason* Mabja scorchingly criticizes what is clearly Chapa's position, and yet his insistence on a rigorous formulation of the Madhyamaka view owes just as obviously much to the former's teaching.[45] We have already noted that the distinction between inference (Tib. *rjes dpag*) and rational cognition (Tib. *rigs shes*), which is crucial for Mabja's development of Candrakīrtian *pramāṇa*s, rests on the apparatus found in Chapa's works.[46] Similarly, in the *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* Chapa presents the following exchange between a follower of Candrakīrti's approach and himself:

> It may be objected: "Since the Mādhyamikas have nothing to prove, they cannot reasonably set forth an [autonomous] argument." Yet since the opposition then would not be harboring any distorted understanding that is in discord with the basic condition of cognizable things, stating a consequence (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*) would not be reasonable either.
>
> The objector may retort: "The belief in ultimate entities constitutes a distorted understanding that is in discord with the basic condition of cognizable things." Well, since you then claim that being empty of ultimate entities is the basic condition of cognizable things, you can no longer maintain that you have no thesis.[47]

If, Chapa here asks, the Mādhyamikas indeed have no view or thesis to prove, then how could they reasonably identify anything as a *mistaken* understanding, since they then would have nothing to contrast such error against? In other words, what would the Mādhyamikas be arguing against if they themselves had no notion of correct understanding? If on, the other hand, Mādhyamikas both can and should identify certain views as mistaken, then there must, Chapa argues, by

the same token also be views that for them are correct. We have already noticed a very similar line of thought in *The Appearance of Reality*:

> *Then, since self and other are mutually dependent,*
> *If there is no position of one's own there is no position of others either.*
> *What, then, is it that you wear yourself out refuting*?[48]

In the *Ornament of Reason*, Mabja elaborates on this argument in the following way:

> If even reliable cognitions that are acknowledged by the world or agreed upon by others[49] cannot be accepted, our own position cannot be set forth. We can then not maintain that although things lack any nature, they appear merely relatively as illusion-like dependent origination. Nor will there be any way to induce the understanding that the positions of others, the extreme beliefs in conventional non-existence or actual existence, are false. Hence, the wish to refute the positions of others would not arise. Likewise, there would be no way to ascertain whether or not the property of the position, entailment, and exclusion have been claimed. Hence, the object of attack through consequential argumentation would remain unestablished. Finally, since there would be no way to see the contradictions between the various elements of an opponent's statement, the consequential argument would itself remain unestablished. Thus, using consequences to refute another's position would be unreasonable.[50]

Mabja thus clearly kept the rigorous spirit that Chapa cherishes in *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners*, and it may well have been Chapa's emphasis on *pramāṇa* as an inextricably natural element in any Madhyamaka exegesis that lead Mabja to formulate the doctrine of Candrakīrtian means of knowledge that we find in his *The Appearance of Reality* and *Ornament of Reason*.[51] Yet Mabja also expresses a profound wariness about the motives and conclusions that underlie Chapa's logico-epistemological enterprise:

> There are some Mādhyamikas who see emptiness as a mark (Tib. *stong pa mtshan mar lta ba*). For them, emptiness, as the negation of any sense of personal and phenomenal self, exists as the object of rational cognition. Were it not so, they argue, the [cognition of emptiness] would be lacking a cognizable object of evaluation (Skt. *prameya*), and so it would neither be a rational cognition nor a reliable means of knowledge (Skt. *pramāṇa*). Furthermore, what is meant to be negated, namely true entities, would instead end up established.
>
> Also this position, which holds that emptiness is real, must be refuted, because as long as one harbors such attachments liberation will be impossible. Moreover, when the object [i.e. emptiness conceived of as the real condition] is examined logically, we do not find it, and so it [indeed] can be negated."[52]

From Śākya Chokden we learn that Mabja's co-student, Tsang-nakpa, mockingly spoke of "those who see emptiness as a mark" (Tib. *stong pa la mtshan mar lta* ba) to refer to the position of their former teacher,[53] and, although Mabja's texts hardly ever explicitly identify the various opponents that they address, a reading of the *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* makes it quite clear that the one who holds emptiness to be a mark is indeed Chapa.[54] Thus, under headings such as "The absurdity that would follow if the absence of constructs (Skt. *niṣprañca*) were not cognizable,"[55] Chapa argues for an ultimate truth that can and must be grasped through inference. Failure to identify an exclusive negation (Skt. *prasajyapratiṣedha*, Tib. *med dgag*)[56] as the object of ultimately rational cognition (Tib. *rigs shes*)[57] would, by the law of the excluded middle (or as formulated by Chapa: "in the case of two contradictories the negation of one implies the affirmation of the other"),[58] instead imply the ultimate establishment of some positive entity.[59] In other words, unless it can be proven that ultimate non-existence indeed pertains to the phenomena under investigation, the implication will be that it *does not* so pertain. As phenomena would then *not* be ultimately non-existent, we would (as we turn a double negation into an affirmation) instead have to conclude that they are *ultimately existent*. Hence, the success of the Madhyamaka stands and falls with the mind's ability to seize upon an ultimate negation.

Total lack of establishment is for Chapa the natural and undeniable conclusion that we will come to about the ultimate truth through critical investigation. When the objects of cognition are tested for singularity and multiplicity there comes a point at which it dawns upon the mind that neither the subjects (Skt. *dharmin*, Tib. *chos can*) under investigation nor their intrinsic nature (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*) can withstand the analysis.[60] For Chapa, this lack of any establishment at all is importantly nevertheless itself an object of the mind, and it is this objectively established negation that is the basis for the formulation of the ultimate truth:

> The emptiness of true nature is not established as any essence at all, and it is thus empty of all distinctions. Therefore, since it is not further discernable [in terms of parts or aspects], it is not possible to discern any distinctions whereby the concept of its reality would be annulled. Hence, it resists investigation. The reliable means of cognition through which this is evaluated is the final reliable means of cognition, and since the emptiness of true nature is, in turn, true as the object of [this reliable means of cognition] that evaluates the final condition, it is this that is the bearer (Tib. *mtshan gzhi*) that supports the convention "the ultimate truth."[61]

For Chapa, Madhyamaka investigation leads to the irrefutable establishment of a total negation (*dgag pa 'ba' zhig*, which for him is the definition of *prasajyapratiṣedha*).[62] As he says, "complete lack of establishment will in the end be determined as complete lack of establishment,"[63] or, in slightly different words, nothing whatsoever will in the end never be anything else than just that. First, Chapa explains,[64] it must be understood that everything can be divided into infinitesimal particles and moments of cognition. Then, with the help of the

Madhyamaka argument, it must further be seen that these subtle components know neither singularity nor plurality, and that they hence are not established with the nature of anything at all. Yet, once this utter lack of establishment has dawned upon it, the mind finds no basis for any further discernment in terms of aspects or parts. Hence, in encountering this total and irreducible lack of establishment, the mind will be witnessing the ultimate truth. Chapa, in other words, applies the reductionist approach that we see demonstrated in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*[65] to his Madhyamaka project, and so he ends up, as it were, finding an irreducible *dharma*. However, rather than a category of the existent, it is in this case "complete nonestablishment" (Tib. *ci'ang ma grub pa*) or "complete negation" (Tib. *dgag pa 'ba' zhig*) that fulfills the reductionist criterion for ultimate reality.

In Chapa's Madhyamaka the realization of this ultimate, total negation (Skt. *prasajyapratiṣedha*, Tib. *med dgag*) must, however, be combined with the cognition of a relative truth that, despite being ultimately empty, nevertheless features an equally objective relative establishment. All phenomena are, for Chapa, thus equally well described as ultimate and relative substances, because each and every one of them bears the characteristics of both of the truths. Hence, since they all carry such dual characteristics, relative and ultimate *pramāṇas* can as well be made to converge upon every single object of cognition:

> The bearers of the characteristics [of the two truths] do not differ, because all phenomena can be shown to be ultimate substance just as they can be shown to be relative substance . . . Take, as the subject, all objects of cognition. In terms of the reliable means of cognition that has ascertained the absence of constructs, all objects of cognition are of a substance that is real as the object of the reliable means of cognition that evaluates the final [nature of things]. They can, therefore, appropriately be shown to be of the substance of the ultimate truth. On the other hand, in terms of a mind that ascertains an implicative negation, they are of a substance that is real as the object [of a reliable means of cognition] that does not evaluate the final [nature of things]. Hence they can also appropriately be shown to be of relative substance.
>
> In terms of the first type of mind all objects of cognition are established as the ultimate truth, and thereby their being the relative truth in terms of that mind is precluded. This, however, does not preclude their being the relative truth in terms of another type of mind. Similarly, in terms of the second type of mind all objects of cognition are established as the relative truth, and while this precludes their being the ultimate truth in terms of that mind, it does not preclude their being so in terms of another type of mind. There is, in the same way, nothing contradictory about fire being the effect of fuel, while in relation to smoke it is also a cause.[66]

Whatever is cognized by reliable means is, on Chapa's definition, a true/real object (Tib. *yul bden pa*), and so it appears that for him relative and ultimate *pramāṇa*s simply capture different aspects of the same real substance. Just as

there is nothing more or less true about the fact that fire causes smoke than there is about its being dependent on fuel, the two truths are of equal veracity. Hence, to arrive at an accurate perception of things we must as well acknowledge both ultimate and relative *pramāṇa*s.

In accordance with this doctrine of the truths' equal veracity Chapa teaches that, upon Buddhahood, i.e. at the stage of complete cognitive perfection, there is still the presence of a certain type of delusion (Skt. *bhrānta*, Tib. *'khrul pa*), namely the one that is required for the perception of relative reality.[67] Such "delusion of the subject that does not bear analysis" (Tib. *yul can dpyad mi bzod pa'i 'khrul pa*) does, however, not entail any presence of defilements (Tib. *sgrib pa*) because, as Chapa explains:

> Defilement is entailed when one conceives of something impossible as if it were possible, as in the case of the belief in permanent entities. It is also entailed when one apprehends an object that is devoid of efficacy, such as the appearance of two moons or an object universal. Yet since neither of these occur in the case of the Buddha [there is no defilement in Buddhahood despite the presence of delusion].[68]

For Chapa, the relative reality can be seen as delusion, yet only in a very particular sense. The deceptive thing about relative reality (Skt. *samvṛti*) is, we may conclude, for him exclusively the fact that to sentient beings it appears to be perfectly real, while in fact it does not withstand investigation. Once this ultimate lack of establishment has been acknowledged there is, on the other hand, nothing problematic, or even unreal, about the relative truth, and so it is also perceived by the Buddha as it truly and objectively is. A denial of such perception of relative reality on behalf of the Buddha is on the other hand enumerated among the severe flaws that Chapa identifies in the approach of Candrakīrti. On Chapa's argument, such denial amounts to a nihilist view (Tib. *chad lta*).[69]

Early on in our investigation of Mabja's Madhyamaka we noticed that for him the two truths cannot be thought of as different in essence, and that there hence is a sense of convergence between them in relation to "the thing that appears" (Tib. *ji ltar snang ba'i dngos po*). Nevertheless, Mabja's philosophical project stands in clear opposition to Chapa's thought of a substance that is the common locus of both relative and ultimate qualities. Indeed, Mabja continues to demarcate genuine Madhyamaka from the approach that sees emptiness as such an ultimate quality, or mark (Tib. *mtshan ma*), that is borne and displayed by the substances that make up reality. The perception that such an approach is detrimental to the path of the Madhyamaka underlies Mabja's rejection of the notions of a relative reality that is established by particular characteristics (Tib. *rang mtshan gyis grub pa*), of a reliable cognition that occurs by the force of facts (Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma*), of an ultimate truth that can be framed by defining characteristics (Tib. *don dam la mtshan nyid yod pa*), and of appearances that are experienced from the perspective of the Buddha (Tib. *sangs rgyas kyi rang ngor la snang ba*).

Thus, despite his continued reliance on much of Chapa's thought, Mabja sees the doctrine that "takes emptiness to be a mark" as a fatal misunderstanding. While the teaching of emptiness is meant to be the remedy of all views (Skt. *dṛṣṭi*, Tib. *lta ba*) this pseudo-Madhyamaka instead makes a view out of emptiness. Hence, as the remedy has now itself become the cause of bondage, liberation will have been precluded.[70]

3.1.4 On the reception of Candrakīrti in Tibet

As for the history of Madhyamaka philosophy in Tibet, the period prior to the fourteenth century has, due to first and foremost a lack of primary sources, until now been lying in relative darkness. With the currently emerging publications of central texts by important early scholars, a number of significant discoveries have, however, already been made,[71] and we may both hope for and expect that much more will come to light in the near future. Based on readings of the *Illuminating Lamp*, Mabja's *The Appearance of Reality* and *Ornament of Reason*, and Chapa's *Middle Way of the Three Easterners* we may already now conclude that the Tibetan translations of the *Clear Words* and *Entering the Middle Way* almost immediately spawned significant revisions of matters that are of underlying importance to the Madhyamaka enterprise. While a Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika exegetical split may have been expressing itself in Kashmir even earlier, it is thus clear that in Tibet these Candrakīrti treatises have since the beginning been associated with debates about issues central to the formulation of the Madhyamaka view (Skt. *darśana*, Tib. *lta ba*).

The immediate emergence of these debates is important to notice, because in the works of later influential Madhyamaka teachers, such as Rongtön, Gorampa, and Karmapa Mikyö Dorje, Candrakīrti-inspired Madhyamaka tends to be absorbed into a meta-exegesis that sees the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika disagreements as occurring on a quite formal level that has, comparatively, little significance for the Madhyamaka view as such. These authors are moreover all critical of Tsongkhapa's perception of a marked Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction, and they tend to contrast the latter's teaching with the views of the masters of the past in general. Moreover, Tsongkhapa and his heirs also themselves make efforts to set their account apart from the exegesis of previous scholars in Tibet. On a superficial reading of all of these authors, we might therefore get the general impression that the early interpreters of Candrakīrti in Tibet tended not to perceive any substantial issues at stake in the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika debate. Such an impression is, however, not borne out by a reading of the *Illuminating Lamp* and the texts by Mabja and Chapa that we have been concerned with here.

We may at this point want to draw up some general lines, and so we might rely on the *Illuminating Lamp*, Chapa's *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners*, and Mabja's *The Appearance of Reality* and *Ornament of Reason*, to extrapolate three distinct lines of response to Candrakīrti's treatises. According to the first, Madhyamaka reasoning reveals that our experience of things is flawed, so flawed that the very idea of accurate human cognition, whether by way of the senses or

through the use of reason, will have to be relinquished. A second approach on the other hand rejects this conclusion, and it instead aims at fully accommodating the teaching of emptiness within a framework that sees both perception and reason as equipped with genuine epistemological power. Finally, a third type of response would distinguish itself by rejecting either of the former two in isolation, seeking instead to achieve a form of synthesis. It is not hard to see, respectively, the author of the *Illuminating Lamp*, Chapa, and Mabja as representatives of such three "schools," and this model also seems to be quite in tune with the way Mabja himself presents his middle way between the epistemological extremes that his opponents allegedly adhere to.[72]

Thinking in terms of such three distinct responses to the challenge presented by Candrakīrti is thus not unwarranted. Nevertheless, we may also want to acknowledge that the first two responses really are more abstract derivatives than they are actual options for a Mādhyamika. They are, so to speak, the two polar ends of a scale, and it is therefore always in relation to, and hence in between, these two unqualified and in themselves rather sterile "yes" and "no" positions that the actual Madhyamaka enquiry and discussion will have to take place. No Mādhyamika can succeed in upholding either of the first two approaches in complete denial of the other, because, while the Mādhyamika's path is one of critical reason and argumentation, it carries just as clearly strong aspirations and commitments in terms of non-duality and the inconceivable. Hence, also the *Illuminating Lamp* is, after all, an account of the proper role of reason and argumentation in the Madhyamaka, and its rejection of *pramāṇa* thus importantly emerges within an attempt to furnish the scriptural teaching of universal emptiness with an argument that, from the perspective of the author, otherwise cannot be coherently supplied by the *pramāṇa*-thinking Svātantrika.[73] Similarly, at what appears to be the other end of the scale, even Chapa, despite his instance on a substantial object to which both relative and ultimate *pramāṇa*s can relate, will agree that dependent origination resembles an illusion, and that ultimately nothing is established as anything at all. In this way every Madhyamaka interpretation must, one way or the other, succeed in accounting for both the apparent successes of reason and the utter emptiness of all. Although the character of the tension may differ dramatically, Madhyamaka philosophy must always emerge within the charged field between such binary poles.

Now as we noted before, a number of influential, later Mādhyamikas adopt a quite reconciliatory treatment of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika differences, seeing them primarily as issues of method and form. Given the fervor of the discussion that we witness in the early texts we have looked at, such an interpretation may come across as somewhat surprising. We might have expected a more decisive outcome, either for or against Candrakīrti. Yet a reconciliatory exegetical current appears also to have existed right from the beginnings of the Tibetan debates. In the *The Appearance of Reality*, Mabja hence reports the following view:

> As for [Candrakīrti's] rejection of reliable means of cognition, what the Autonomists and the Consequentialists[74] disagree about is merely the

> enumeration of those means. There is no essential disagreement between them.[75]

If we trust the attribution made by an annotation elsewhere in *The Appearance of Reality*, we have some reason to associate this interpretation with Mabja's co-student, Tsang-nakpa.[76] To Mabja, however, this position displays hopelessly little appreciation for the real issues:

> This idea shows simply that a lack of mental clarity has prevented one from realizing the extremely subtle issues. If in terms of the relative there were reliable means of cognition by the force of facts, then what sort of autonomous argument, featuring an established property of the position and pervasion, would be able to refute [the findings of such fact-based reliable means of cognition]? The Autonomist is precisely someone who accepts autonomous arguments in the context of the relative. Otherwise, why would anyone let attachment to the mere name of Consequentialism be a reason for undertaking an exhausting refutation of others?[77]

The problem with the Svātantrika position is for Mabja more than formal, because it buys into realist intuitions that are detrimental to the Madhyamaka enterprise as a whole. If it were possible to achieve fact-based cognition, even in terms of the relative, then nothing whatsoever would be able to refute that which would thereby be established by the force of reality itself. The Svātantrikas restrict the relevance of particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*) to that which is mere relative reality (Skt. *saṃvṛti*), and so think themselves good Mādhyamikas.[78] Yet, in their efforts to provide a solid account of that which was meant to be merely relative, they instead, on Mabja's analysis and contrary to their own explicit claims, end up implicitly affirming its irrefutable, and therefore ultimate, reality.[79] For Mabja, genuine Mādhyamikas must therefore take serious issue with the Svātantrika account of arguments (Skt. *hetu*, Tib. *gtan tshigs*) and the relative truth.

It appears that from the beginning there have been those Tibetan Madhyamaka interpreters who took the Prāsaṅgika-Svātantrika distinction to be expressing a decisive, qualitative difference in terms of view (Tib. *lta ba*, Skt. *darśana*), whereas others have downplayed the Indian textual controversy, treating it primarily as a discussion of method and form. Although gradually Prāsaṅgika tends to become accepted as the preferable approach, such two general groupings remain observable up through the centuries.[80]

With his strong rejection of Candrakīrti, Chapa is among those philosophers who see matters of fundamental importance at stake in the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika debate, yet, for reasons we can only speculate about, plain rejection of his approach very quickly ceased to be a viable response to Candrakīrti. Nevertheless, Chapa's criticisms of a perceived anti-rational and nihilist streak in Candrakīrti continued to fuel the debates, and in various incarnations his arguments would, as we have seen in the case of Mabja, also be adopted into declared

Candrakīrtian Madhyamaka.[81] In the following we will seek to gain an impression of the way Mabja's Madhyamaka, and in particular his identification of a decisive qualitative difference between the Svāntantrika view and genuine Madhyamaka, was to influence the exegesis of later Tibetan philosophers.

3.2 The reception of Mabja's Madhyamaka

Over the following pages we will investigate the Prāsaṅgika/Svātatrika distinction as it appears in the works of Longchen Rabjam, Tsongkhapa Losang Drakpa, Gorampa Sönam Seng-ge, and Karmapa Mikyö Dorje, looking in particular for links with Mabja's epistemology. Let me, however, first of all specify that, while these authors have undeniably been chosen as representative of the so-called "four great schools" (Tib. *chos lugs chen po bzhi*), I do not wish to thereby imply that this quite recent paradigm is in any way definitive, exhaustive, or even accurate for our present purposes. As the case of someone like Mabja clearly shows, the links of inspiration and critique criss-cross far too intricately to be captured by the idea of four quite separate and individually homogenous schools.

It ought here also to be made clear that the following pages are not meant to serve as general introductions to the Madhyamaka philosophers that we visit. Indeed, in choosing our focus for the present discussion we are bound to leave out issues that any decent such introduction to these authors would otherwise have to include. Here, we approach these later Mādhyamikas looking specifically for ex- or implicit associations with or reactions to Mabja's Madhyamaka. In the process we will notice central features of their philosophies as these become relevant to our present concern, and so also develop concise accounts of their diverse and often mutually antithetical perceptions of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction. By the end of our survey we will draw some conclusions with respect to the evolution of Tibetan Prāsaṅgika that may be relevant to our understanding of Buddhist philosophical literature in general.

3.2.1 Longchen Rabjam

Subsequent to Mabja's time, Longchen Rabjam (commonly referred to as Longchenpa, Tib. *Klong chen pa*) appears to be the first author of whom we have extant text, who contrasts genuine Madhyamaka as set forth by Candrakīrti with a Svātantrika that, despite its elaborate efforts, fails to recognize the genuine view beyond extremes.[82] For Longchenpa,[83] Nāgārjuna's teaching is Prāsaṅgika alone;[84] all others fail to recognize the utter indivisibility of appearance and emptiness, and hence of the two truths,[85] which allows for the crucial transcendence of all constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*,) and extremes (Skt. *anta*, Tib. *mtha'*).[86] In his *White Lotus*, the auto-commentary to his *Wishfulfilling Treasury*, Longchenpa initiates the discussion of the Prāsaṅgika approach with the following summary:

> The unmistaken meaning of [Candrakīrti]'s classic treatises is here to be concisely explained as follows. The basic condition is, in essence, not

> established by any nature whatsoever, and [yet] all claims involve attachment to truth (Tib. *bden zhen*). The claims that are made in the classical texts that belong to the systems of the proponents of nature (Skt. **svabhāvavādin*, Tib. *rang bzhin du smra ba*) are, therefore, tied up in internal contradictions. All that is spoken of in the treatises of those who make claims by deference to the power of fact (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta* Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs*) is hence to be refuted, and in the wake of the refutation there ensues no definitive (Skt. *niścaya*, Tib. *nges pa*) thesis, as there would for an Autonomist (Skt. *svātantrika*, Tib. *rang rgyud pa*).[87]

We notice that, like Mabja and Jayānanda, Longchenpa associates the Svātantrika with a belief in cognition by the force of facts (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*, Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs*) and a thereby ensuing definitive certainty (Skt. *niścaya*, Tib. *nges pa*). However, the decidedly negative approach that Longchenpa here expresses may make us wonder as to its compatibility with Mabja's doctrine of mundane *pramāṇa*s. Might Longchenpa, like the side that Mabja rejects, be denying any sense of a position that Mādhyamikas would conceive of as their own? This issue is taken up some pages below, and the structure of Longchenpa's discussion is here similar to the relevant passages in Mabja's *Ornament of Reason*.[88] Having shown the unacceptable consequences of either a plain denial or unqualified acceptance of there being such as a thing as a claim assented to by the Mādhyamikas themselves, Longchenpa next proceeds to explain how the proper perspective is to be achieved:

> Each of the above [positions] are only partially accurate. As such, they simply show a lack of understanding of the classical texts. Nevertheless, these flawed [accounts] both possess certain elements that must be accepted and others that cannot be acknowledged, and hence [the issue of whether claims are made by the Middle Way] cannot be [resolved by] taking an unequivocal position. Thus the following must be understood. Presence or absence of claim concerns the relative truth. The Consequentialist follower of the Middle Way is not concerned with determining whether claims are present or absent ultimately. [However,] since in the context of relative convention there is to begin with such an issue, it should accordingly be understood that [for the Middle Way] there is both a presence and an absence of claim. When debating and when taking the ultimate as the object there is no claim to be made, because since all appearances are entirely devoid of nature the basic condition cannot support any claim. At the time of taking the path of the ensuing attainment, and conventions, as the object, one personally examines and contemplates all the principles of the full discourse of the Teachings, knowing them to be philosophy that is simply dreamlike and illusory. One also teaches these [principles] to others, thereby letting them open their eyes of discernment. This serves the purpose of gathering the two accumulations and of accomplishing the two Bodies (Skt. *kāya*, Tib. *sku*).[89]

For Longchenpa, the issue of the presence or absence of claims can only be relevant in terms of conventions and the relative truth. No Prāsaṅgika would, he argues, even entertain the question as to whether ultimately claims might obtain. Once properly appreciated as a conventional issue, the question is, however, both meaningful and complex, and it can by no means be brushed off with a simple affirmation or denial. The answer emerges, then, through sensitivity to context. When involved in debate (with a realist opponent to the teaching of emptiness, we may assume), and when turning towards the ultimate truth so as to thereby enter equipoise (Tib. *mnyam bzhag*), there is no presence of claim simply because the emptiness of all things cannot support any. Outside of equipoise, however, and when concerned with conventional matters, the Mādhyamikas both can and must develop a clear understanding of all matters pertinent to the practice of the path. Whether philosophical or related to more practical issues, such understanding will as well be made the basis for communication with others.

Resembling Mabja, Longchenpa thus calls for a modification and synthesis of two otherwise contradictory positions, warning that a one-sided stand will entirely miss the point. Yet, as we shall see, it is now Mabja's turn to assume the role of the insensitive counterposition, for it is in fact he whom Longchenpa takes as representative of the unqualified position that Mādhyamikas do maintain views:

> It appears that the early generations [of Tibetan Mādhyamikas] did not distinguish between these two modes, and that thus Tsangpa[90] would deny claims while Mabja would accept them. As both [positions] can be seen to contain certain good qualities and certain flaws, it appears that they did not quite recognize the actual purport of the classical texts. Having opened up the eyes that develop through intelligent discernment and exposure to the scriptural traditions in general, I have here explained clearly what was hidden or scattered in the classical texts. Know that when in the future anyone succeeds in setting forth this position, it will be by the power of this treatise of mine.[91]

We have seen that Mabja draws a distinction between, on the one hand, what is the case ultimately (Tib. *don dam par*) and, on the other, what can be said about ultimate states of affairs (Tib. *don dam pa'i yul*).[92] No claims pertain ultimately because there is, in short, nothing that is ultimate. Thus, also notions of ultimate non-existence and emptiness are for Mabja in the final analysis utterly unfounded. In the relative context the Mādhyamika may nevertheless still create theses about the ultimate in the form of superimposition (Tib. *sgro 'dogs pa*). Contrary to relative theses, such claims about ultimate states of affairs (Tib. *don dam pa'i yul*) are, however, not wholeheartedly asserted (Tib. *zhe bas 'dod pa*) by the Mādhyamikas themselves.

Longchenpa nowhere refers specifically to Mabja's distinction between things being the case ultimately (Tib. *don dam par*) versus the ultimate understood as a constructed domain (Tib. *don dam pa'i yul*). Perhaps he was not aware of these seemingly important details, or perhaps he is in the *White Lotus* simply creating

a strawman under the name of Mabja. If, however, Longchenpa did recognize this distinction as Mabja's, and if he is in fact taking it into account in his discussion in the *White Lotus*, he apparently did not find it genuine. Hence Longchenpa specifies that, "when debating [with realists] and when taking the ultimate as the object there is no claim to be made, because since all appearances are entirely devoid of nature, the basic condition cannot support any claim."[93] When concerned with the ultimate truth, either for oneself or in a debate with an adversary, the Mādhyamika simply cannot find grounds for the assertion of any sort of claim whatsoever. Also, the notion of a negative thesis that the Mādhyamika advances but does not wholeheartedly believe in is, we may suggest, thus for him unintelligible. Longchenpa subsumes his critique of the position that accepts Madhyamaka claims in the following way:

> It is contradictory to hold that actually there is nothing while conventionally there is. Hence [this idea] does not belong anywhere.[94] Moreover, when claims are made they are all conventional. Claims in terms of the ultimate are the approach of the lower [philosophical schools]. Which among the higher [schools] would make claims in terms of the ultimate? The existent and the non-existent are of incompatible substance. Hence, this incomplete (Tib. *so ma zin pa*) philosophical system is not the approach of the great Middle Way.[95]

Remaining true to the way things are, and thus also avoiding contradiction, the Mādhyamika sees, for Longchenpa, no basis for any claim or assertion about the ultimate. Claims are entirely conventional, and should always be acknowledged as such. This does not detract from the importance of developing them, but if the teaching of emptiness is taken to express an ultimate negation, and so is thought of as a claim about some ultimate condition of non-existence, then that simply cannot be coherently combined with the notion of relative existence. Resting on a contradiction in terms of the simultaneous presence and absence of the same thing, such a philosophical system would have no bite (Tib. *so ma zin pa*) whatsoever.

Let us, however, once more note that Mabja, while insisting that all constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*) must be negated in terms of the ultimate, still explicitly rejects that non-existence should have any bearing on the ultimate. Hence, his position is clearly more sophisticated than what is immediately apparent in Longchenpa's criticism.

Once, as Longchenpa elsewhere specifies, the *saṃvṛti* character of all claims and philosophical systems has been genuinely acknowledged, there are abundant grounds for the development of Madhyamaka theses and claims. In fact, a plain rejection of there being such a thing as the Madhyamaka position would, for Longchenpa, be blatantly self-defeating, for such a denial turns out to be itself an asserted claim.[96]

Despite Longchenpa's explicit criticism of Mabja, it hence appears that, in their insistence on the necessity of properly contextualized claims on behalf of the

Mādhyamikas themselves, Mabja and Longchenpa are in general agreement. Moreover, they would certainly not have any difference with respect to the notion of theses being irrelevant from the perspective of meditative equipoise (Tib. *mnyam bzhag*). Hence, if we wish to distinguish their perspectives on the nature of Madhyamaka reasoning, it seems that we must focus, as we began to above, on Longchenpa's inclusion of debate situations (Tib. *rtsod pa*) in the context wherein no claim is sustainable, seeing this in the light of his insistence that the issue of presence or absence of claims is a purely relative (Skt. *saṃvṛti*, Tib. *kun rdzob*) matter. For Longchenpa, the Prāsaṅgikas distinguish themselves by acknowledging the utter and complete inseparability of appearance and emptiness. For him, all appearances are of course empty, yet also emptiness necessarily appears, and the concept of an ultimate that has no appearance is therefore meaningless.[97] In a debate situation Prāsaṅgikas hence merely refute the assertions of others based on that claim-transcendent acknowledgement. Moreover, if outside of such a situation one were to maintain a distinction between theses about the relative that are genuinely accepted versus theses about the ultimate that are merely held as helpful superimpositions this would, for Longchenpa, create an artificial distinction between relative appearances and their ultimate lack of establishment, which belies the actual state of affairs. Given their inseparability, notions of ultimate and relative truth do not permit distinct epistemological attitudes.

While such an interpretation would seem to be in line with Longchenpa's Prāsaṅgika exegesis in the *White Lotus*, it assumes, however, that he was familiar with the details of Mabja's distinctions mentioned above, and that he wanted to take them into account. In his texts we have, as already mentioned, no explicit evidence of either being the case.

Wherever Longchenpa's critique may be coming from,[98] it is clear that his and Mabja's accounts of the presence and absence of Madhyamaka claims have more in common than one is likely to assume based on Longchenpa's rather crude sketch of Mabja's position.[99] Moreover, Longchenpa's distinction of the Prāsaṅgika in terms of their denial of fact-based (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*, Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs*) cognition and definitive (Skt. *niścaya*, Tib. *nges pa*) theses is clearly in the tradition of Mabja and Jayānanda. In the following we will consider another author who, like Mabja and Longchenpa, saw a decisive qualitative difference at stake in the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika debate, yet whose general influence on Tibetan Madhyamaka has exceeded that of Longchenpa.

3.2.2 Tsongkhapa Losang Drakpa

In Tsongkhapa's works[100] the genuine, and hence the soteriologically effective, Madhyamaka view is often taught precisely in terms of a juxtaposition of Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika. In the *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path*, Tsongkhapa thus proceeds:

> Certain Mādhyamikas, such as Bhāviveka, assert that particular characteristics, which are established by their own essence, are conventionally existent

> in phenomena, and they likewise assert that autonomous arguments belong to [the Mādhyamika's] own approach. The latter assertion they make, however, based on this conventional existence of particular characteristics that are established by their own essence. Hence, the issue of whether or not autonomous arguments are appropriate in the [Mādhyamika's] own approach comes down to this extremely subtle object of negation [i.e. the conventional existence of particular characteristics that are established by their own essence].[101]

When Svātantrikas assert that particular characteristics account for the way things are in terms of the relative truth they have, for Tsongkhapa, fallen pray to a subtle, and hence also unacknowledged, reification of the apparent reality. Therefore, when they insist that autonomous arguments (Skt. *svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi rtags*), and not just mere consequences (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*), are required for a sound and definitive proof of emptiness, they are not just making a point about the technicalities of applied logic. Rather, they are basically giving voice to a subtle realist impulse, a tendency to perceive a mind-independent element in the apparent reality. While obviously running counter to their declared Madhyamaka program, this unacknowledged and yet, on Tsongkhapa's analysis, implicit subtle realism in fact prevents the Svātantrikas from gaining the true Madhyamaka insight. Elaborating on the character of this realist tendency, Tsongkhapa continues:

> According to their approach, when a cognition based on a healthy sense faculty experiences these natures [of particular characteristics] that are established by their own essence, then that cognition is, conventionally, free from delusion with respect to the object that appears. Likewise, also the thought that apprehends that such natures are present in things such as sprouts is in the same way free from delusion with respect to its conceived object.[102]

Svātantrikas believe, in other words, that while perception obviously does not realize the ultimate truth, it nevertheless enjoys access to the *relative* reality, just as it objectively is. Likewise, the conceptual judgments that acknowledge the constituent characteristics of this relative reality are, for them, accurate as well. Subscription to modes of cognition that in these ways are free from delusion (Skt. *bhrānta*, Tib. *'khrul pa*) and in touch with the particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang mtshan*) of relative reality is then, for Mabja[103] and Tsongkhapa alike, both the mark and the downfall of the Svātantrika.

To posterity in both the East and the West this critique of Svātantrika Madhyamaka has, however, largely become known as Tsongkhapa's. As we have already noted, Tsongkhapa and his adherents, as well as their traditional opponents, have for different reasons all sought to highlight an element of unique novelty in Tsongkhapa's thought. Yet, while his Madhyamaka discussions often do proceed against the backdrop of the allegedly flawed exegesis of earlier generations (Tib. *snga rab pa*), there are also instances where Tsongkhapa himself

appears to acknowledge that certain early Tibetan Mādhyamikas did in fact recognize the "extremely subtle object of negation" (Tib. *dgag bya shin tu phra ba*) to which everyone but the Prāsaṅgika remains blind. Thus, having delineated the position of certain misguided individuals, who think themselves Mādhyamikas and yet deny that there is such a thing as a Madhyamaka view that is to be established by reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇasiddha*, Tib. *tshad mas grub pa*),[104] Tsongkhapa, in the *Essence of True Eloquence*, next describes a second group of Tibetan Madhyamaka interpreters:

> Others[105] argue that not even the statement, "All of the principles that pertain to the relative and ultimate truths are spoken of from the perspective of others, and do not belong to [the Mādhyamikas's] own approach," is made on behalf of [the Mādhyamikas] themselves, and that it is thus merely apparent from the perspective of others. This latter explanation is absent in the early refutations of the Autonomists, and it is thus simply a more recent account. Among those [holding this position] there are some who acknowledge the object of negation that is uniquely refuted by the present approach [of the Prāsaṅgika]. However, as the majority of them deny that dependent origination is established by reliable means of cognition, it seems that this is the predominant position of this school of thought.[106]

For our current purposes it is of primary interest that Tsongkhapa here acknowledges the presence of Mādhyamikas, who rejected the Svātantrika approach and yet appreciated the potential contradiction that is implicit in the denial of all claims. For them, both affirmed theses as well as their denial were hence to be seen as equally conventional. Some among these scholars were, Tsongkhapa implicitly explains, thereby able to set forth reliable means of cognition in a way that acknowledges the subtle object of negation, which only the Prāsaṅgika succeeds in identifying. By Tsongkhapa's own definitions, these early Tibetan Mādhyamikas would thereby have arrived at genuine Prāsaṅgika epistemology.

Indeed, when we compare Mabja's and Tsongkhapa's analyses of the present appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) we notice that they both find it 1) devoid of particular characteristics even in relative terms, 2) experienced by a sense consciousness that is in delusion, and 3) eminently suited to be taken as the object of reliable means of cognition. In drawing the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction, Tsongkhapa is thus clearly employing the same apparatus that we see developed in Mabja's works. However, while we have here noted his apparent approval of certain early Tibetan Mādhyamikas, I believe that Tsongkhapa never makes any direct reference to Mabja as a source for his teaching.

On the other hand, in the *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path*[107] Tsongkhapa treats four specific *mis*understandings of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction, and the fourth of these has in fact been associated with Mabja.[108] This final mistaken position is, however, clearly the one that is treated in the most favorable light among the four. Primarily, this is because this position builds on a refutation of those, for Tsongkhapa, false Mādhyamikas who deny that

philosophical positions (Skt. *pakṣa*, Tib. *phyogs*) and reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇa*, Tib. *tshad ma*) are established from the perspective of the Mādhyamikas themselves. Tsongkhapa presents this fourth mistaken account of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction in the following way:

> Certain earlier Tibetan scholars, who are followers of the master Candra, thoroughly refute the approach according to which Mādhyamikas have neither any position of their own, nor any reliable means of cognition whereby such a position could be established. Their own approach they set forth through a refutation of both perceptual and inferential reliable means of cognition that are due to the force of facts (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*). Thus they reject all principles of reliable means of cognition (Skt. *pramāṇa*) and reliably cognized objects (Skt. *prameya*) that are thought of in terms of rationally analyzed particular characteristics. Conventionally, they instead accept the reliable means and objects of cognition that are acknowledged in the world without analysis. By such means, they explain, the followers of the Middle Way will set forth probative arguments against their opponents, and thus establish the lack of reality by the use of authentic arguments (Tib. *gtan tshigs yang dag*). The fact that this is done by unanalyzed reliable means of cognition is seen as the reason that they nevertheless do not end up Autonomists.[109]

This position does indeed sound much like Mabja's, and if Tsongkhapa had him in mind here, it is noteworthy that he treats Mabja's view as distinct from that of Jayānanda. As we noted earlier, Mabja's critique of entailment (Skt. *anvaya*, Tib. *khyab pa*) and the notion of definitive certainty (Skt. *niścaya*, Tib. *nges pa*) is in both letter and sense clearly inspired by the latter. In his treatment of the fourth mistaken position, Tsongkhapa, however, chooses to zoom in on two features that he sees as untenable on account of both reasoning and scripture:

> It appears that according to this position there are, conventionally, particular characteristics. That which is refuted is then that such particular characteristics, in terms of convention, should be able to bear rational analysis. The problems entailed by such a position have already been explained.
>
> Moreover, it is not reasonable to assert that according to the master Candrakīrti, when representatives of the Middle Way reason with realist opponents by means of inference for the sake of others, they do so employing arguments that feature the three characteristics (Skt. *trairūpya*, Tib. *tshul gsum*) and are established according to the systems of both parties. That is not reasonable, because such a position is specifically refuted in the *Clear Words* (Skt. *Prasannapadā*). Moreover, if one takes such a position one may refrain from using the term "argument by the force of fact," yet it will still be impossible to deny that what one employs are autonomous arguments. This will be further explained, and I shall hence not elaborate here.[110]

In short, based on Tsongkhapa's analysis the fourth mistaken position fails by 1) holding that particular characteristics are established and yet do not resist analysis and 2) ending up committed to autonomous arguments (Skt. *svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*) that are established according to both the Mādhyamikas and their opponents. Regarding the first of these points, it seems to me that, if the position under critique were in fact meant to be Mabja's, Tsongkhapa's criticism would be rather ill placed. As we have seen,[111] Mabja specifically argues that the notion of particular characteristics is unreasonable even in terms of convention and the relative truth. This he contends repeatedly and explicitly, and if he held that particular characteristics exist in some weak sense prior to analysis, he would have had to find a place for them in terms of convention and the relative. It could even be argued that on this issue Mabja is comparatively more explicit, because while both he and Tsongkhapa hold that particular characteristics do not exist even conventionally, the latter explains that for ordinary individuals (Tib. *so sor skye bo*) the objects of the sense consciousnesses are in perception still *given as if* they featured such particular characteristics.[112] For Mabja, the case is in a sense quite the opposite, because, while conventionally sense perception experiences illusion-like dependent origination, the notion of particular characteristics is an automatic, and yet thoroughly mistaken, conceptual response that runs counter to the pre-conceptual experience of the actual percepts.[113] All in all, it seems that, for this criticism to be relevant to Mabja, Tsongkhapa would have to be getting at some implicit absurd consequence (Tib. *thal ba*) of the former's account, yet I have not been able to find any passages in Mabja's works that would lend themselves well to that sort of critique.[114]

As for the second criticism, we will here not be able to consider the specifics of Tsongkhapa's view on the role played by consequences (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*) in debates between Mādhyamikas and realists. Nor will we be able to investigate the related question as to the feasibility of a "subject that appears in common" (Tib. *chos can mthun snang ba*) to both parties during such debates.[115] We noted earlier, however, that when Svātantrikas insist that autonomous arguments, rather than mere consequences, are required for a genuine proof of the Madhyamaka thesis, the reason that they perceive this requirement is, according to Tsongkhapa, to be found in their belief that conventionally, particular characteristics exist.[116] Once we recall this crucial connection between the assertion of conventional particular characteristics and the requirement of autonomous inference (Skt. *svatantrānumāna*) in debates with realists, it seems that also much of the substance of the second criticism can have little relevance to Mabja's position. That is to say, since Mabja acknowledges the even conventional non-existence of particular characteristics, the very basis for the flawed construal of an autonomous proof would, on Tsongkhapa's own account, in Mabja's case be absent. Once purified of the belief in particular characteristics, the mere application of a "triply characterized" (Skt. *trairūpya*, Tib. *tshul gsum*) argument (as otherwise associated with *svatantrānumāna*) that is consented to by the Mādhyamikas themselves is, for Tsongkhapa, in itself not problematic at all.

Mabja does allow a sense in which the Mādhyamika's argument may be seen as established to both parties in the debate,[117] and whether this is compatible with Candrakīrti's critique of autonomous proofs is of course debatable. Yet since Tsongkhapa holds that ultimate analysis does not undermine conventional experience,[118] it is hard to imagine that he could here, beyond the purely nominal, perceive anything objectionable in Mabja's doctine.

Perhaps Tsongkhapa did then not see Mabja, but some related thinker, who contrary to the former was committed to the conventional existence of *svalakṣanas*, as the representative of the fourth counterposition in the *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path*. If the position was meant to be Mabja's, it would seem that Tsongkhapa (just as it could have been the case with Longchenpa) was either not familiar with the specifics of Mabja's position, or otherwise deliberately wanted to construe it in a way that would make it particularly susceptible to his critique, and so prepare the ground for the presentation of his own view (which in *the The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* follows immediately after the refutation of the fourth counterposition).

Let us in closing note that, despite their profound commonality, Tsongkhapa and Mabja do differ on a number of central issues. While Tsongkhapa consistently argues that "the refutation of nature (Skt. *svabhāva*) is itself the establishment of absence of nature (Skt. *niḥsvabhāva*),"[119] Mabja associates such an insistence on the establishment of negatives from the point of view of rational cognition (Tib. *rigs shes kyi ngor*) with those Svātantrikas who "treat emptiness as if it were a mark" (Tib. *stong pa mtshan mar smra ba*).[120] Likewise, whereas Mabja sees appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) as the product of ignorance, and hence also as irrelevant to the perspective of Buddhahood itself, Tsongkhapa instead takes this principle as the basis for a rich account of omniscience. Reminiscent of Chapa's thought of a non-defiling delusion (Tib. *yul can la dpyad mi bzod pa'i 'khrul pa*) that is responsible for the Buddhas' perception of relative reality,[121] Tsongkhapa here allows that the Buddhas, although free from delusion, still see sentient beings within a dualistic, object/subject framework (Tib. *snang yul la ma 'khrul pa'i gnyis snang*).[122]

Finally, while Mabja and Tsongkhapa both champion reliable means of cognition, seeing these as crucial elements in Candrakīrti's Madhyamaka interpretation, such means of cognition can for Mabja never produce any infallible certainty, and the determination of truly fixed, metaphysical facts is for him hence precluded. For Tsongkhapa on the other hand, the prospects of a durably incontrovertible mapping of the world are much more promising. If something exists conventionally (Tib. *tha snyad du yod pa*) it must for him be findable through a conventional *pramāṇa* that cannot be overruled any other means of knowledge.[123] This requirement of perfect facticity, which once more is reminiscent of Chapa's epistemology, seems to have become so widely accepted among Tsongkhapa's followers that to Jamyang Shepay Dorje it has become inconceivable that anyone could think differently. Hence in his *Compendium on the Clear Words*, the latter writes:

> If something established by a reliable means of cognition sustains damage by another reliable means of cognition, the former would not be asserted a reliable means of cognition. In merely this the realists and all Autonomists (Skt. **Svātantrika*) and Consequentialists (Skt. **Prāsaṅgika*) agree.[124]

We have, however, seen that Mabja requires the development of sound and versatile, reliable means of cognition, while in the same breath rejecting any expectation that such means might engender knowledge of a pure and incontestable fact.

3.2.3 Gorampa Sönam Seng-ge

Whether Prāsaṅgika or Svātantrika, all Madhyamaka approaches reveal, for Gorampa Sönam Seng-ge,[125] the abiding way of things (Tib. *gnas lugs*), which entirely transcends the mind's constructs (Skt. *prapañca*, Tib. *spros pa*). Having cited a sūtra, Nāgārjuna, and the Svātantrika master Jñānagarbha to this effect, Gorampa explains:

> Thus, when the various scriptural traditions of the Middle Way treat either existence or non-existence as the object of negation, they explain that also the relevant counter pole must be taken as a *negandum*. Thereby it is established that in the end none at all among the constructed extremes are to be apprehended.[126]

By virtue of being Mādhyamikas, it follows that at the time of enquiring into the actual condition of things, neither Prāsaṅgikas nor Svātantrikas will confine the object of negation to the thought of some particular, ontological mode. Instead they will proceed to refute all possible variations and combinations of existence as well as non-existence, for they realize that the way things are is not within the purview of the conceptual mind. Hence, rather than on account of their realization of emptiness,[127] the difference between the two schools is first and foremost to be determined in terms of the phenomenology of Madhyamaka debate. In the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*, Gorampa states this succinctly:

> [According to the Consequentialists] the proponent of the Middle Way accepts the subject of the debate before having ventured into any examination of it. The opponent, on other hand, [also] accepts this subject after having begun to examine it and until the inference that realizes the *probandum* occurs to him. Thus the subject represents, as it has been explained before, the conventional truth, the means [for realizing the ultimate]. (This framework is to be applied to all the arguments that will be explained below.)
>
> According to the Autonomist, on the other hand, the subject is also accepted subsequent to the Middle Way proponent's examination, and it is likewise accepted after the [above mentioned] inference has occurred to the opponent. This is what distinguishes the Autonomist.[128]

Both the Prāsaṅgika and the Svātantrika thus initially accept a mere appearance (Tib. *snang tsam*) that can be made the epistemically shared subject in a debate with realists, and which for both the Mādhyamika proponent and opponent thus constitutes the means for realizing the ultimate. According to the Prāsaṅgika, however, this shared subject ceases to be relevant to the Mādhyamika as soon as it is subjected to analysis, because at this point the Mādhyamika assumes the Madhyamaka view, which transcends all claims.[129] For the realist opponents, however, the subject will remain undeniable during the debate all the way up to the point that they themselves realize the Mādhyamika's point. The Svātantrika's account differs, because the principle of mere appearance is here accepted by the Mādhyamika also subsequent to analysis, and it will therefore also remain asserted after their opponents have gained an inferential realization of the actual condition of things. This is, for Gorampa, the basis for the disagreement between the two exegetical schools.

Drawing the distinction between them in terms of whether the relative truth is asserted to be established by particular characteristics would, on the other hand, for Gorampa be a serious misconstrual of the issue. If Svāntatrikas were committed to conventionally existent particular characteristics that resist investigation they would, he argues, be realists, and not Mādhyamikas. On the other hand, in terms of the merely relative truth that cannot resist analysis, particular characteristics are, as he sees it, a perfectly harmless principle that is accepted by Candrakīrti as well.[130] Gorampa, who in several of his works carries out a sweeping critique of Tsongkhapa's Madhyamaka interpretation, thus entirely rejects the notion that Svātantrikas are crypto-realists, who hold the relative truth to be grounded in particular characteristics:

> Some say that according to other followers of the Middle Way [than the Consequentialists] existence has to be in terms of particular characteristics, and if something lacks particular characteristics it must be non-existent. Yet why would one want to make the learned and accomplished masters of the Noble Land the subjects of that sort of denigration?[131]

Considering this an unreasonable and degrading distortion of the views of the Indian masters, Gorampa, in the concluding verses of *Distinguishing the Views*, thus recapitulates his own position as follows:

> At the time of enquiring into the way things are, it may be accepted that the subject of the enquiry appears, or that it does not appear.
> It is here that the distinction between Consequentialists and Autonomists emerges.
> There are some, however, who without the slightest understanding of this point
> Make autonomous arguments out of arguments accepted by others,[132]
> While teaching that autonomous arguments establish particular characteristics.

> This approach may be true for uneducated fools,
> Yet it is also pursued by those who vainly think themselves learned scholars.
> Alas, what a pity it is that sentient beings of this dark age
> Throw away the gold ornaments of the path of liberation,
> Taught with one voice by the learned and accomplished masters of India and Tibet,
> And instead put on self-fabricated ornaments of charcoal.[133]

A Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction in terms of commitment or lack of commitment to particular characteristics is thus, as Gorampa sees it, nothing but a misguided fabrication that has no bearing whatsoever on the views of the masters of the past. Gorampa, however, associates this doctrine exclusively with Tsongkhapa, which is quite peculiar since we can exclude the possibility of Gorampa being unaware of the specifics of Mabja's position. Indeed, apart from the opening and concluding sections, and except for certain phrases and short passages that would be anathema to his own Madhyamaka interpretation (such as those associating Svātantrikas with a belief in conventional particular characteristics), Gorampa's commentary to Nāgārjuna's *Root of the Middle Way*, the *Light Rays of the Authentic View*, consists almost entirely of *verbatim* passages from Mabja's *Ornament of Reason*. Hence, he must clearly have been aware that Mabja saw the Svātantrika position as failed Madhyamaka because of its attempted recourse to conventional particular characteristics. It is, then, as if Gorampa deliberately chooses to ignore that this, as he sees it, despicable[134] exegetical framework is already present in the works of "the great Mabja" (*rma bya chen po*, as he occasionally refers to Jangchub Tsöndrü).

The extent of Gorampa's reliance on Mabja in the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* will, however, go unnoticed unless one reads both commentaries. While the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* does refer to Mabja, the latter is simply mentioned among several members of the "earlier generations" (Tib. *snga rabs pa*), i.e. earlier generations of Tibetan Mādhyamikas, with whom Gorampa occasionally either wants to take issue, or otherwise note for their insights. In fact, while Gorampa's *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* and *Distinguishing the View* contain a number of appreciative references to Mabja,[135] such references take in the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* primarily the form of criticism. Thus, when with respect to the issue of whether Mādhyamikas can be said to adhere to a view of their own, the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* enumerates three opponents,[136] the third of these is represented by Mabja. Citing the *Ornament of Reason*, Gorampa states:

> Jangchub Tsöndrü holds: "For a follower of the Middle Way, there are ultimately no positive or negative theses at all. In terms of the ultimate, therefore, we do not create any affirmative or negative theses whatsoever either. As for the mere relative, however, in the present context [of the *Root of the Middle Way* I. 1] we present a thesis that is a mere eliminative negation, whereas in general we also set forth theses that are determinative affirmations."[137]

What we find here is thus an explicit citation[138] singled out for refutation, which is embedded in a commentary that itself consists almost entirely of inexplicit quotations from the same text as the one being cited – it is safe to say that from the point of view of modern literary conventions such a format stands out as peculiar. In the case in question, however, Gorampa does not find Mabja's account satisfying, for it fails, he argues, to answer a qualm that may be raised in terms of whether the presence of any thesis on behalf of the Mādhyamika would not be in contradiction of Nāgārjuna's denial of all claims found in his *Rebuttal of Objections* 29:

> This third account [i.e. Mabja's], appears to be saying that while theses as such (Tib. *rang ldog nas*) do not exist in terms of the ultimate, they do exist in relative terms. It therefore cannot answer the opponent's qualm [about the negation of origination that is set forth in the *Root of the Middle Way* I. 1 being a contradiction of Nāgārjuna's denial of all claims in the *Rebuttal of Objections*], because the opponent's concern already assumes that the thesis (i.e. the negation of origination in the way of the four extremes) is asserted in merely relative terms. In other words, the qualm is *not* presented from the perspective of not having distinguished the relative and the ultimate. Therefore, since they are based on having noticed both an affirmation and a denial of theses in terms of the mere relative, the opponents' concern has still not been dealt with.[139]

Gorampa thus argues – in a way that resembles what we saw with Longchenpa[140] – that the presence or absence of views chiefly is a conventional matter, and that hence any reference to an ultimate absence of theses is largely irrelevant to the issue. Gorampa himself resolves the status of Madhyamaka claims by relying on the notion of a subject that first appears to both of the parties in common, and then ceases to do so, just as we saw in his description of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction. Rather than in terms of ultimate non-existence versus relative existence, the issue must for him hence be approached from a phenomenological point of view:

> Here is the crucial issue: Generally, when Mādhyamikas set forth the conventional truth they maintain both negative and affirmative theses. These theses are moreover accepted as autonomous, because in this context Mādhyamikas assert various negative and positive properties in relation to a subject that appears to both [proponent and opponent] in common. When the unborn ultimate is ascertained, however, no autonomous thesis is held, for there is then no subject that appears [to both parties] in common. There is therefore not either any assertion of positive or negative properties with respect to such a subject at all.[141]

Also in the formulation of his own account Gorampa thus proceeds in a way that is reminiscent of Longchenpa, for he chooses to see the issue in terms of different, conventional contexts that either entail or preclude the formation of claims.

Gorampa also takes up Mabja's position on the status of Madhyamaka claims in the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*, yet here the latter's account is interestingly presented in a light that makes it appear much in line with Gorampa's own:

> According to Mabja, no view of the Middle Way is asserted at the time of investigation [into the way things actually are], whereas conventionally the view of the Middle Way, as well as negations and affirmations, theses, and arguments are all asserted. In this regard his position is justified.[142]

In the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*, Mabja's account is thus seen as turning on an acknowledgement of two different contexts, and there is no implication of any ontological judgment in terms of ultimate versus relative reality. Nevertheless, despite this expressed approval, the passage above is in fact the beginning of a sustained critique of Mabja's epistemology. Gorampa hence continues:

> On the other hand, Mabja also asserts that in the context of inference accepted by others the triple characteristic (Skt. *trairūpya*) is established by reliable means of cognition that are accepted in the world, and this is an extreme delusion.[143]

While Gorampa is generally either appreciative or respectfully critical of Mabja's views, here the case is obviously different. In the passage, Mabja is seen as asserting that the so-called "triple characteristic," which in the Dharmakīrtian tradition characterizes an authentic argument (Tib. *gtan tshig yang dag*),[144] is accessible to both the Mādhyamika and the realist alike by means of "reliable means of cognition that are accepted in the world" (Tib. *'jig rten na grags pa'i tshad ma*).[145] If this were the case, Gorampa proceeds, the subject under debate would also be established by such mundane *pramāṇa*s,[146] and this would in turn be a contradiction of the message of the *Clear Words*.[147] Accepting that the subject remains within the purview of such *pramāṇa*s would of course also be irreconcilable with Gorampa's description of the rejection of the shared subject, which we have seen is central to his understanding of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction. Hence, during debates with realists not even mundane *pramāṇa*s can, for Gorampa, be relied on as a shared epistemological framework. The sharpness of the tone with which Gorampa here rejects Mabja's account is, as we have noted, unusual, and we might imagine that this is due to the latter's relative resemblance to that of Tsongkhapa,[148] whose positions Gorampa often targets with a particular wrath.

Outside of this debate context, and when not engaged in the ascertainment of the ultimate truth, Mādhyamikas are, as Gorampa sees it, on the other hand fully capable of developing autonomous arguments (Skt. *svatantrahetu*, Tib. *rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*) as well as inferences by the force of facts (Skt. *vastubala-pravṛtta*, Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs*). Having first granted Mabja that, in Dharmakīrti's epistemology, cognition by the power of fact generally does come

with realist commitments,[149] Gorampa subsequently nevertheless accepts the latter principle, invoking the authority of Sakya Paṇḍita (Tib. *sa skya paṇḍita*, 1182–1261):

> According to Sa-paṇ, however, the above [version of inference by the force of fact, which was rejected by Mabja] is the realist's position. For the proponent of the Middle Way, it is permissible to simply say that conventionally the property has the power to produce the given sign, or that conventionally the property and the sign are identical. Based on such considerations he approves, with a perfect rationale, of the notion of reliable means of cognition by the force of facts.[150]

For Gorampa, the notion of fact-based reliable means of cognition is thus not only harmless, but indeed desirable for an account of conventional *pramāṇa*. However, when he here follows Sakya Paṇḍita in accepting that in merely conventional terms objective knowledge is thoroughly achievable, Gorampa appears to assume exactly the position that we have seen Mabja dismiss as Svātantrika crypto-realism, a position that for Mabja gives an air of balance and objectivity, yet is actually irreconcilable with the genuine Madhyamaka view. Gorampa must have been well aware that for Mabja the rejection of cognition by the power of fact (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*) is not just a formal issue, and yet he chooses to leave the matter here, without any reference to its wider significance (such as its relation to the notion of conventional particular characteristics) within Mabja's Madhyamaka.

The role played by Mabja in Gorampa's Madhyamaka works is significant, yet also complex, and far from obvious. We have noted that Gorampa felt comfortable with adopting, albeit invisibly so, most of the subject matter from the *Ornament of Reason* as his own commentary, and his most comprehensive, non-commentarial Madhyamaka treatise, the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*, likewise occasionally incorporates central themes and passages from Mabja's works.[151] Moreover, in *Distinguishing the Views* Gorampa explicitly positions himself in the tradition of certain past masters, and among them Mabja features quite prominently.[152] On the other hand, the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* also abounds with critique of other Tibetan Mādhyamikas, past and present, and we have noted that both this work and the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* explicitly refute Mabja on a number of accounts. With these explicit criticisms, Gorampa distances himself from Mabja in a way that somewhat conceals his otherwise thoroughgoing – although selective and generally *in*explicit – reliance on the latter.

At the same time there are also serious disagreements between the two, which Gorampa simply chooses not to make explicit. First and foremost, we have seen that, in his critique of Mabja, Gorampa all the while ignores one issue, which given his strong censure of it elsewhere clearly must have seemed in need of prompt correction: Mabja's crticism of the Svātantrika's belief in relative particular characteristics. As Gorampa presents this issue, Tsongkhapa is the first to

denigrate the Svātantrikas by associating them with this sort of unreasonable commitment.

Similarly, while for Mabja appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) as such is the product of ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*, Tib. *ma rig pa*), Gorampa sees mere appearance (Tib. *snang tsam*) as unbroken even within the final fruition of Buddhahood.[153] Yet also in this context he does not explicitly associate the former doctrine with Mabja, and in the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* Gorampa thus instead simply rewrites the text of Mabja's *Ornament of Reason* (which as we know constitutes the bulk of the former commentary) wherever such a conflict of views occurs.[154]

In sum, while most of Gorampa's reliance on Mabja remains inexplicit, so does much of their disagreement. When Gorampa occasionally chooses to take direct issue with Mabja he demarcates his own position along lines that simultaneously understate both their differences and the extent of his own reliance.

3.2.4 Karmapa Mikyö Dorje

Contrary to Gorampa, Karmapa VIII, Mikyö Dorje,[155] in his monumental commentary to Candrakīrti's *Entering the Middle Way*, the *Chariot of Accomplished Ones*,[156] consistently treats Mabja in entirely positive terms. In conjunction with his presentation of the two truths, Mikyö Dorje thus sets forth the following pledge of allegiance:

> This account follows Jowo Kagyü[157] and the early generations of Consequentialists in general. In particular, it adheres to the explanations of the Four Sons of Patsab, and among them the teaching of Mabjawa Jangchub Tsöndrü as it appears in his great Madhyamaka compendium.[158] Thus I say the following to fulfill the intent of the holy masters of the early generations: …[159]

Among all the great Tibetan Prāsaṅgikas of the past, Mikyö Dorje thus chooses the teaching of Mabja to provide the framework for his explanation of the two truths. Mabja's Madhyamaka appears, however, to undergo significant transformations at the hands of Mikyö Dorje. In his elaborate treatment of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction[160] Mikyö Dorje thus initiates his discussion by presenting a certain *mis*interpretation, which at first glance may appear much like the position of Mabja himself:

> Some say: "According to the assertions of the Autonomists, perception and inference are authentic reliable means of cognition, and these reliable means of cognition moreover occur by the force of facts. Thus they are, for the Autonomists, not just accepted by others but established by virtue of the experience of one's own [mind-]stream. Autonomists will then prove emptiness and refute any position that is irreconcilable with that by relying on this type of reliable means of cognition."[161]

Mikyö Dorje never specifies who the proponents of this misreading of the Svātantrikas are, yet what they erroneously ascribe to the latter is a belief in the type of cognition by the power of fact that is taught by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Mikyö Dorje lays out this principle as follows:

> That which is implied by the so-called "force of fact" is the efficacious aspect of an entity. In other words, it is the capacity to perform its function that a self-authenticating[162] entity possesses, independently of anything else, by the power of its intrinsic nature. The function that such an entity performs is therefore also self-authenticating, and a reliable means of cognition that is, in the same sense, self-authenticating is thus referred to as a "reliable means of cognition by the force of fact."[163]

I am not quite sure how we are to render best Mikyö Dorje's term *rang bden pa* (here translated as "self-authenticating"), but it seems to imply an irrefutable, self-manifesting quality that is supposed to characterize genuine entities. Such entities, Mikyö Dorje explains, are held by the believers in cognition by the power of fact to express intrinsic and equally "self-authenticating" forces, and they can therefore be relied on in the cultivation of genuinely objective epistemic practices. Thus, we arrive at "reliable means of cognition by the force of fact." While this may not seem far from the type of *vastubalapravṛtta* that the Svātantrika, according to Mabja, asserts with respect to the conventional reality,[164] Mikyö Dorje, however, denies that such a principle should have any relevance in the Madhyamaka context at all. We have seen Mabja argue that, if the Svātantrika assertion of cognition by power of fact had no consequences beyond mere matters of form, there would have been no need for other Mādhyamikas (such as Candrakīrti) to expend so much energy in refuting their position.[165] In the present context, however, Mikyö Dorje applies a similar line of thought, yet to an apparently quite opposite conclusion:

> The Autonomists exert themselves by learning, reflecting, and meditating in order to gather the provisions that will enable them to teach, debate, and author texts. All the while they thus seek to prove that entities and all other phenomena are empty of any essence of their own and that they have no self-authenticating establishment. If the Autonomists could possibly be asserting the aforementioned sort of [self-authenticating] reliable means of cognition by the [force of facts], then why would not all of these efforts be in vain? Think of this carefully![166]

The ascription of such realist epistemic beliefs to the Svātantrikas is thus for Mikyö Dorje quite absurd, and to see such a move in the works of Mabja is for him hence clearly a mistake. He moreover argues that as a concession to the world and its conventions even Prāsaṅgikas may very well make use of a reasoning that is held to be supported by the force of facts:

> In particular, although they do not accept that there is, in terms of either of the two truths, anything that is established by the force of facts, [Consequentialists] do when negating and affirming take into account that according to both the world and the treatises there is such a thing as the force of fact, which pertains to all entities. Thus, speaking in accord with that which is accepted by others, they relate to others by means of vast refutations that are brought about by the force of fact.[167]

Thus, since the realist's notion of cognition by the power of fact is irrelevant to any Madhyamaka school, and since as a mere pedagogical convention such cognition is perfectly acceptable even to Prāsaṅgikas, it appears that, for Mikyö Dorje, Mabja's self-professed adherent, the principle of cognition by the power of fact is largely irrelevant to the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction. But if not in terms of a belief in objective forces and particular characteristics, how are we then to understand what it is that distinguishes the schools? Mikyö Dorje explains:

> The vital key point can be shown as follows. According to the Consequentialist approach, there are no principles of *probandum* and proof in one's own system. Nevertheless, in order to dispel the imputations of others one sets forth negations and affirmations in harmony with the world. According to the Autonomist approach there is, with respect to the ultimate, no *probandum* and no proof in one's own system. However, with respect to the relative, one applies reasoned principles of *probanda* and proof in the pursuit of insight into reality, and one thus sets forth distinguished negations and affirmations that dispel the imputations of others.[168]

Both schools, as equally genuine Mādhyamikas, thus agree that reasoning cannot capture the ultimate, and that hence no claims or theses could have any bearing on the ultimate. The Svātantrika, however, wishes to restrict this denial of claims to the ultimate truth, and so holds that theses and proofs must nevertheless be accepted in terms of the merely relative. If there is any merit in the way that we have been reading him here, it is clear that Mabja, the alleged authority for Mikyö Dorje's Prāsaṅgika interpretation, would on this definition himself end up a Svātantrika … . Nevertheless, this is for Mikyö Dorje the way to properly draw the exegetical distinction, and he can hence also present the issue as follows:

> The difference between Consequentionalists and Autonomists is in terms of whether or not the proofs that are set forth conventionally are asserted established in terms of mere convention.[169]

For Mikyö Dorje, a Prāsaṅgika is thus a Madhyamika who does not hold any claim with respect to either of the two truths, and who in a debate situation simply relies on the epistemic procedures accepted by the world to refute the misconceptions of others. Now we have seen that Mabja argues strongly against such a

universal denial of views and claims on behalf of the Mādhyamika. Nevertheless, in a quite flamboyant move Mikyö Dorje brings up precisely the sort of argument that Mabja otherwise applies in this context,[170] this time treating it as an objection of the opposition:

> It may be argued: “Well, since for you there is no approach of your own that is established by reliable means of cognition, it follows that there cannot either occur to you any refutations in the form of consequential arguments. The reason is that you do not have any thought to express such an argument. If, however, you do have such a thought to express a consequential refutation you will, by the same token, also be interested in setting forth the thesis that emerges by the reversal of the relevant consequence (Skt. *prasaṅgaviparyaya*). When that sort of interest occurs, you will be unable to avoid the verbal and conceptual formulation of that thesis.”[171]

Although it may remind us strongly of Mabja, the above objection is, as Mikyö Dorje sees it, simply pathetic. What should be so problematic, he asks, about having the wish to help others get over their misconceptions without thereby oneself becoming bound by them? Clear-eyed doctors may wish to remove the cataracts that cover the eyes of their patients, but they do not need any wish to remove cataracts on themselves in order to perform this benevolent task. Likewise, through the use of arguments and examples the Prāsaṅgikas simply allow others to shed their ignorance without seeing this process as in any way restricting or confining for themselves.[172] When confronted with the further objection that such a denial of theses would itself amount to an asserted thesis, Mikyö Dorje retorts:

> That is a sheepishly dumb way of thinking. Along those lines a non-implicative negation would turn out to be precisely an implicative negation, the lack of rain fall would itself imply rain fall, and so on and so forth. The hopes of the fools [who present that type of objection] will never be fulfilled.[173]

As Mikyö Dorje sees it, the Prāsaṅgika approach harbours no illusions at the level of any of the two truths, and so it simply does not assent to anything at all on its own accord. The Prāsaṅgika denial of claims is hence purely and simply a negation. If by virtue of being expressed, this negation would as well have to be construed as an affirmation, the very idea of negation would have lost its meaning. With yes and no being equal, all conventions would collapse.

As Mikyö Dorje sees it, Mabja’s critique of cognition by the power of fact has been misunderstood. Having cited verses 11b–c in Mabja’s *The Appearance of Reality* and stanza 1 in Jayananda’s *Logic Hammer*,[174] Mikyö Dorje therefore subsequently explains:

> Based on such statements certain later individuals have come to the conclusion that when the Autonomists negate and affirm, they do so while

> professing to reliable means of cognition, etc., which are in terms of ultimately established, self-authenticating entities, just as it is held by the Sutra-followers (Skt. *sautrantika*) and the proponents of Mind Only (Skt. *cittamātra*). That, however, is a mistaken interpretation of the early master's intent.
>
> The Sūtra-followers and the proponents of Mind Only concur in asserting that by virtue of their merely mental essence, all entities of mind and mental features that are free from delusion are established by particular characteristics as the ultimate truth. The Autonomists, however, with respect to all these phenomena that appear as outer and inner entities, do not at all speak of any force of facts that is due to the true establishment of particular characteristics. Rather, they classify these phenomena as exclusively relative and false.[175]

Mikyö Dorje thus once more makes it clear that the above mentioned construal of objective reliable means of cognition belongs in the context of realist thought and that it has no relevance to Madhyamaka whatsoever. Yet, how can we reconcile such an exegesis with Mabja's thorough rejection of fact-based cognition of *conventional* particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*)? To answer this obvious qualm, Mikyö Dorje proceeds to draw a distinction between cognition by the power of fact as understood in, respectively, realist and Svātantrika epistemology. While both of these construals must in the end be given up, their implications vary significantly:

> Now, when the early master [i.e. Mabja] explains things in this way, he is targeting the Autonomist position according to which it is reasonable for the two debating parties to engage in refutation and proof within a framework where phenomena are established in relative terms and by relative reliable means of cognition. Moreover, it is also thoroughly justified that the great being, Jangchub Tsöndrü, in his *Appearance*, *the Ornament of Reasoning*[176] and elsewhere elaborately refutes the teaching of [Dignāga's] *Compendium of Reliable Means of Cognition* (Skt. *Pramāṇasamuccaya*) and [Dharmakīrti's] *Commentary on Reliable Means of Cognition* (Skt. *Pramāṇavārttika*) – a teaching that is based on the tenets of the Sutra-followers and Mind-only School and according to which the means and the object of reliable cognition are held to exist in a self-authenticating way. The rationale of these refutations can be seen from the fact that also the master, the great being, Nāgārjuna, in his *Detailed Examination* (Skt. *Vaidalyasūtra*) elaborately refutes the sixteen categories of the logicians for the sake of disproving the notion of self-authenticating reliable means and objects of cognition.[177]

Mabja is, as Mikyö Dorje sees it, involved in two quite distinct refutations of cognition by the power of fact, and it is important that these two be separated by his readers. Occasionally Mabja does target Svātantrika epistemology, yet in his critique of reliable means of cognition he is primarily out to refute the non-Mādhyamika positions set forth by Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and their followers.

The Mabja that we are here introduced to thus first and foremost follows Nāgārjuna in showing that the realist conceptions of reliable means of cognition are false.

Yet, while pursuing this primary objective, Mabja, according to Mikyö Dorje's interpretation, thus at times also extends his criticism to encompass a subtle imperfection that can be determined in the Svātantrika approach. As indicated in the passage just cited, the Svātantrikas, based on Mikyö Dorje's interpretation, hesitate to follow the Prāsaṅgikas in drawing the full implications of Madhyamaka insight. This hesitation is due to their commitment to the merely relative establishment of phenomena by means of what Mikyö Dorje terms "illusion-like reliable means of cognition by the force of fact" (Tib. *sgyu ma lta bu'i dngos po stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma*).[178] According to Mikyö Dorje's interpretation, the Svātantrikas thus recognize that, given their ultimate nonestablishment, all phenomena are unreal and resemble an illusion, yet they also believe that by equally illusory cognitive means phenomena can be established as, so to say, verily unreal and truly illusion-like. Such a belief in the provability of the principle of illusion (Tib. *sgyu ma rigs sgrub pa*)[179] can, however, from the Prāsaṅgika perspective be seen to be unfounded:

> If, in terms of the relative, there would be a relative force of fact and establishment by reliable means of cognition, it would follow that there in that context also would be [a sense of] non-deceiving true existence. As a consequence of that, the entirety of relative phenomena could then no longer be said to be conditioned and false. Hence, by asserting that phenomena [are manifest by] an illusion-like force of facts and that they thus can be established by reliable means of cognition, one will [as a Mādhyamika] be contradicting one's own words. Likewise, an illusory horse can then no longer be illusory, and will instead end up an actual horse. The idea that by reliable means of cognition phenomena can be shown to be truly like an illusion is therefore clearly a slight holdover of grasping at constructs (Skt. *prapañca*) and marks (Skt. *nimitta*).[180]

While upon investigation it becomes clear that the notion of a "real illusion" is a contradiction in terms, the Svātantrikas fail to realize this. Instead they believe that by careful application of the proper cognitive means it can be unequivocally proven that the relative appearances of efficacious entities are, really and truly, nothing more than illusion. Prāsaṅgikas, Mikyö Dorje argues, do on the other hand not become mesmerized by this concept of illusory appearances, and they are therefore able to fully appreciate Nāgārjuna's all-encompassing and self-consuming refutation of all constructs and extremes. As we have already noted above, the Prāsaṅgikas are, for Mikyö Dorje, distinguished by their relinquishment of the claim that "the proofs that are set forth conventionally are established in terms of mere convention."[181] Hence it is, according to Mikyö Dorje's interpretation, in order to bring out this distinctive transcendence of all views and claims that Mabja occasionally expands his critique of the realist conception of

cognition by the power of fact (which both Prāsaṅgikas *and* Svātantrikas reject) and so refutes also the notion of a merely conventional, illusion-like cognition by the power of fact, which otherwise will continue to seduce the Svātantrikas.

This holdover of ignorant conditioning that can be determined in the Svātantrika approach is, Mikyö Dorje explains, nevertheless not so strong that it could prevent the Svātantrikas from gaining genuine insight. Indeed, Svātantrikas are authentic Mādhyamikas who by means of Madhyamaka arguments realize the emptiness of all things.[182] Their remaining, subtle fixation on a conventional establishment of *probandum* and *probans* will therefore also quite naturally dissolve by itself as they, by following their Svātantrika path, become increasingly familiar with the view of emptiness.[183]

The issue of cognition by the power of fact (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*) then after all *does* have a relevance to the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction. Nevertheless, for Mikyö Dorje it would be a grave error to conceive of Svātantrikas as crypto-realists or pseudo-Mādhyamikas, and this was, he seeks to make clear, certainly never the intent of the great Jangchub Tsöndrü either. Several of the passages from the *Chariot of Accomplished Ones* that we have been looking at here are hence appropriately presented under the heading, "How the perfect realization of the early generations of Tibetan Consequentialists has been misinterpreted by later individuals who vainly think themselves followers of the early generations."[184]

Mikyö Dorje in fact reserves a specific chapter to refute Tsongkhapa's take on the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika issue, and he never directly refers to the latter as a follower of Mabja. Nor does Tsongkhapa ever make a point of appearing as a follower of Mabja. Still, given the central conceptual framework that Mabja and Tsongkhapa share, it seems to me that Mikyö Dorje also may be alluding to Tsongkhapa, or at least to important teachers in his lineage, when he refers to these misguided individuals of recent times, "who vainly think themselves followers of the early generations."

Mikyö Dorje's Prāsaṅgika philosophy is presented as a vindication of the early generations, and of Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü in particular. We have seen, though, that in the process Mabja becomes associated with an account – i.e. the denial of any formulatable sense of view and reliable means of cognition on behalf of the Mādhyamikas – which he himself sought particularly to refute. Among the authors that we have considered here, Mikyö Dorje alone expresses a truly unreserved respect and admiration for Mabja. Yet he is arguably also the one who displays the least concern for the literal format of Mabja's doctrine.

Let us finally note an important regard in which, among our authors, Mikyö Dorje remains uniquely faithful to Mabja's word (although he here specifies that the source of his discussion is Mabja's reported teacher and co-student, Khu Dodebar).[185] Expanding on Candrakīrti's teaching in the tenth chapter of *Entering the Middle Way*, Mikyö Dorje presents a sustained and elaborate discussion, arguing for complete agnosticism with respect to the character of the Buddha's gnosis.[186] We will conclude our reading of Mikyö Dorje, by letting the following passage, in which he sums up his view on the issue, speak for itself:

> In this context the following must be understood. Since all minds that apprehend relative, false objects are deceived, all subjects in the form of relative cognition are indeed in delusion. Hence, there is upon investigation no establishment whatsoever for a cognition that at the stage of Buddhahood perceives the relative [reality]. This is the message conveyed in all of the Buddha's words on the Great Vehicle. The commentators on the Great Vehicle have, however, been intimidated by the literal expression of the teachings, and so they have sought to avoid the pitiful conclusion that conventionally there is no such thing as omniscience. Hence, they have not been able to convey these teachings in their literal mode. This, however, is what the fearless song of Candrakīrti explains: The Buddha has no gnosis or mind that takes relative, deluded phenomena as its object, for the Buddha has permanently relinquished the two obscurations (Skt. *āvaraṇa*) along with their imprints (Skt. *vāsanā*). However, this does not entail the denigrating conclusion that the Omniscient One then does not possess any omniscient gnosis, because upon investigation the notion of the Buddha's knowing everything, as well the notion of the Buddha's not knowing everything are both constructs (Skt. *prapañca*). Hence, even if one were to say that, "the Buddha possesses an omniscient mind" that would turn out to be a denigration, because one would be claiming that constructed properties are relevant to the Buddha.[187]

3.3 What happened to Mabja's Madhyamaka? On authority and innovation

As his central works appeared in Tibetan translation, Candrakīrti's critique of knowledge brought about upheavals that in Tibet since then have continued to impact the development of Buddhist philosophy in general, and Madhyamaka in particular. Followers of the new texts launched revolutionary attacks on the epistemic foundations of both the relative and ultimate truths, seeing in the *pramāṇa*-theoretic construction of the Buddhist doxographical edifice a realist element that is irreconcilable with the spirit of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Teachers such as Chapa, on the other hand, saw these attacks as nihilism running under the Madhyamaka banner, and so sought to meet them and their avowed Indian texts head on with the full force of scholastic rigor.

For reasons about which we can only speculate, the winds of fortune favored, however, the new texts, which had been introduced in a spirit combining caution against even conventional reifications of the empirical with a simple refusal to account for the transcendent. In what must have been a major turning point, Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü, Chapa's "great lion of debate," crossed lines and became a student of the foremost exponents of Candrakīrti.[188] Profoundly disillusioned with the interpretation he had received from Chapa, Mabja emerged among the most influential teachers of the Candrakīrtian orientation. Seeing it as his foremost task to develop the dynamics of the sort of Madhyamaka epistemology that Candrakīrti himself only alludes to, he set off Prāsaṅgika philosophy on a course that has kept the debates alive, well into the present.

The four later authors whom we have considered here all incorporate, as we have seen, central elements of Mabja's interpretation at the heart of their Madhyamaka exegesis. Yet it has also become apparent that, in the case of the first three, the scarcity and often negative tenor of their references to Mabja is generally disproportionate with the actual extent and character of their reliance. This is particularly so in the case of Tsongkhapa, who in crucial contexts employs the apparatus found in Mabja, and Gorampa, who copies Mabja's text in the production of his own work. With Mikyö Dorje the case is in a sense quite the opposite, for his expressed adherence to Mabja tends to hide a fundamental transformation of the latter's views.

We noted earlier[189] that at the time of the introduction of Candrakīrti's texts there appears to have developed a reconciliatory interpretational current, seeking to downplay the exegetical disagreements that were otherwise brought to the forefront by thinkers such as Mabja, Chapa, and the author of the *Illuminating Lamp*. Similarly, whereas Longchenpa and Tsongkhapa both perceive a decisive, qualitative difference at stake in the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction, we have seen that Gorampa and Mikyö Dorje on the other hand explicitly deny that Svātantrikas fail to recognize emptiness, and they clearly reject the idea that the Svātantrika position should somehow amount to a soteriological dead end. Testifying to the lasting influence that Candrakīrti's texts were to exercise, we have, however, also seen that for the latter two authors as well, Prāsaṅgika alone provides the perfect account of Madhyamaka views and practices.

Moreover, while for Tsongkhapa Svātantrikas really are Mādhyamikas only in name, the latter develops, as we have seen, his Prāsaṅgika by incorporating a number of features that are reminiscent of Chapa's early propagation and defense of the Svātantrika masters.[190] Mikyö Dorje on the other hand clearly rejects that the Svātantrika approach should be irreconcilable with Prāsaṅgika, and can in this regard hence be seen as supportive of the same masters whom Chapa sought to follow. However, with his thorough denial of views and claims on behalf of the Mādhyamikas themselves, Mikyö Dorje's Madhyamaka exegesis in the *Chariot of Accomplished Ones* remains highly resonant with the Candrakīrti-inspired attacks on reliable means of cognition that first triggered Chapa's response. Thus, while the original issues remain alive, later authors generally seek to respond to these same issues within a framework that nevertheless grants primacy to Prāsaṅgika. Yet the most vocal among the later critiques of the Svātantrika approach is probably not the one with whom Chapa would have perceived the greatest differences.

As they thus develop their individual accounts of Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinctions, we have seen that our authors draw on Mabja in their own selective ways, and the question as to whose position, as a whole, is the closest to Mabja's is clearly impossible to answer.[191] Mabja's approach characteristically seeks to combine a doctrine that sees consciousness as intrinsically deluded with the robustness and epistemic optimism of *pramāṇa* thought. These two features easily pull apart. Yet, since Mabja pursues both elements with equal passion, he provides, as long as one is selective enough, sustenance for a wide range of Madhyamaka interpretations.

Now in Section 3.2 we have witnessed some features in the reception of Mabja's Madhyamaka that are quite peculiar from the perspective of modern scholarship. We have seen that our authors feel free to 1) appropriate one's predecessor *verbatim* and at length without indicating that they are doing so (as in the case of Gorampa), 2) incorporate his central ideas at the heart of one's own position, and yet leave references to the source of one's account scarce and primarily in the form of criticism (as with Tsongkhapa, Gorampa, and to some extent Longchenpa),[192] and 3) ascribe one's own interpretation to the predecessor in contexts where the latter's texts appear to express the opposite view (Mikyö Dorje).

We have, in other words, seen that so-called "traditional" authors take a number of liberties that would be unacceptable according to the norms of modern scholarship; such moves would be seen as deceitful, clearly illegitimate, and as blatant self-aggrandizement. When it comes to citing, interpreting, and appropriating the views and conceptual apparatus of earlier works, modern scholarship of course cannot accept plagiarism, and while innovation is considered a virtue it is a requirement that one demarcates the character and extent of it. One cannot, as it were, simply rewrite the past. Hence the rules of modern scholarship dictate frequent and explicit nods and acknowledgements towards the past, and thus also towards tradition.

Let us notice, then, that for so-called "traditional" scholars there is in these regards in fact less of an emphasis on reliance on predecessors and tradition, for such authors may choose, as it were, themselves to emerge at the center of the entire tradition. From such a position of being the fountainhead,[193] they may then appropriate past authors, *verbatim* or otherwise, without making any mention of it, and it is as well quite permissible to reshape the views of past scholars dramatically, only to present the emerging ideas as if they were but an orthodox reading of received texts. Now there are of course limits to how far this can be done without losing one's audience but, as a general observation, the parameters are here clearly much less fixed in the traditional context than they are in the modern.

While the ability to demonstrate a profound link with Buddhist tradition and its foremost representatives is obviously of decisive importance for the Buddhist philosopher, there are traditionally a number of ways in which this vital connection may be shown. Indeed, it was often through a breathtaking display of innovation, rather than by following the literal *dictum* of certain chosen predecessors, that this crucial link with the Buddha was established most forcefully. The success and popularity of Tsongkhapha's approach is, of course, a compelling example to consider here, for, had he wanted to do so, Tsongkhapa could easily have backed up his account by frequent references to Mabja, Chapa,[194] etc. Yet, instead, to put it somewhat flippantly, Tsongkhapa chose to take most of the credit himself, while ultimately giving it all to Mañjuśrī.[195] Some of his opponents have, as we know, attacked Tsongkhapa for being out of line with the discourse of the great authorities in the tradition, but it seems, we may conclude, that Tsongkhapa himself wished to highlight an element of uniqueness in his exegesis.

We may also notice such a current in Gorampa's discourse, for, while in his *Distinguishing the Views* he enumerates plenty of early Tibetans who allegedly shared his view, by the end of the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* there are few Tibetan Mādhyamikas whose accounts have not been found wanting. In an expression of really the opposite of traditional scholarly humility (Tib. *khengs pa skyung ba*), we have also heard Longchenpa broadcast the unique pith of his discussion, calling on future generations to acknowledge him alone as its progenitor.[196] Longchenpa's declaration of the exceptional quality of his own perspective moreover somewhat echoes Candrakīriti's remarks at the end of his *Entering the Middle Way*,[197] and a tendency to highlight one's own contribution as entirely unique can thus also be found in Indian *śāstra*.

Observations of this sort appear significant for an attempt at understanding the intellectual climate of pre-modern India and Tibet. Much has in this regard been said about the strictures imposed by tradition, and some accounts have tended to see the pre-modern religious philosopher as an individual struggling, quite against the odds, to express the spirit of enquiry under an otherwise almost crushing weight of received dogma.[198] Given their quite open-ended and, in the fullest sense of the word, creative relation to their intra-traditional predecessors, this picture of the intellectually oppressed philosopher fits in many ways rather poorly with what is apparent in our texts.

It would, however, obviously be quite absurd to claim that traditional Tibetan Buddhist authors have, in a way that can be compared to the situation today, worked in an environment that cherishes and demands innovation. Whatever one may think of our current situation, socio-economic concerns and allegiances to institutions of power and authority have in Tibet often expressed themselves in rigid bigotry. Such intellectually rather sterile sentiments have then shaped the structure of learned discourse, confined curricula to the works of a few chosen heroes, and occasionally even ensued in the official banning of certain provocative writers associated with "the enemy." As has been pointed out by modern scholars,[199] such tendencies tend to gradually reinforce themselves from the fifteenth century onwards, and it is in this regard striking to notice the diversity of view points and interpretations that proliferate around the time of Mabja.

Among the authors we have studied here, Gorampa and Mikyö Dorje both criticize Tsongkhapa with a particular relish that at times verges on fury, and it is easy to imagine reasons other than the purely philosophical influencing their at times clearly *ad hominem* critique. Also their relation to Mabja appears to a certain extent to be guided by their refutations of Tsongkhapa. Thus Gorampa, while generally appreciative of Mabja, corrects him in particular on the issue of cognition by the power of fact. Thereby he takes out the brunt of Mabja's critique of Svātantrikas in a way that avoids explicit reference to the, for him, detestable distinction in terms of rejection or acceptance of relative particular characteristics. Acknowledging the presence of this apparatus in Mabja's work would, we may suggest, make Tsongkhapa appear uncomfortably close to this early Tibetan Mādhyamika master, whom Gorampa claims to cohere with in his critique of Tsongkhapa's spurious and deeply misguided interpretation.

Mikyö Dorje on the other hand sets out to prove that, while Mabja does make use of these conventions, his intent in doing so has been entirely misunderstood. Thus, I suggest, Mikyö Dorje also implicitly argues that we may see Tsongkhapa's Madhyamaka interpretation as amounting largely to a simple misreading of Mabja. While Tsongkhapa speaks of divine inspiration as the underlying reason for his ground-breaking insights, Mikyö Dorje thus instead points to Mabja's pre-existing framework, thereby suggesting a much more mundane genesis of Tsongkhapa's thought. It seems to me that this interpretation of Mikyö Dorje is borne out by the general structure and progression of his Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika discussion.[200]

A similar jab at Tsongkhapa's claim to exceptional originality may be found in Śākya Chokden's *Ascertainment of the Middle Way*. At the end of his account of the Prāsaṅgika's understanding of reliable means of cognition, Śākya Chokden proceeds to cite *The Appearance of Reality* at length, in fact over several pages,[201] and without any obvious specific relation to the preceding discussion. He then makes the following remarks:

> It might be asked: "What is the point of such lengthy explanation [i.e. extensive citation of Mabja]?" I believe many may think that the elaborate exposition [of the Consequentialist account of reliable means of cognition] that I presented above is just like that of certain individuals who have appeared late in the history of the Snowy Land. Bereft of the intelligence of sincere discernment and lacking the oral instructions of the earlier masters, these people outrageously think themselves Mahābrahma, and with that idea in mind, diligently take up writing. The books they produce are, however, devoid of the content structure that would serve to engender trust in the maiden of intelligence, and they lack the type of literary delivery of subject matter that is otherwise cherished by scholars. Rather, written in crude sentences, they present a content that exclusively causes delight among those lacking learning. I have written the above with the wish that those perceiving my discussion to be of exactly that sort may be free from such reservations.[202]

Śākya Chokden's own *pramāṇa* discussion has as already mentioned only little relation to the verses from the *The Appearance of Reality* that he cites. Let us hence first note that, contrary to what Śākya Chokden here alleges, Mabja's teaching is not particularly suited to provide grounding for his own account. Next, we may not need to wonder much as to whom in particular Śākya Chokden may be implying when he speaks of those "certain individuals who appeared late in the history of the Snowy Land," and that Tsongkhapa is then here described as an eager but utterly incapable author has no relevance to our present concern. Rather, what I here find quite striking is the fact that Śākya Chokden first cites Mabja extensively, thereby showing that the conceptual framework generally associated with Tsongkhapa is already present in Mabja's works. Having signaled this much, Śākya Chokden next proceeds to compare Tsongkhapa to Mahābrahma – the god

who according to Buddhist cosmology suffers from the arrogant delusion of believing himself the creator of the entire world. It seems that among the sources of Śākya Chokden's irritation, Tsongkhapa's claim to originality is a prominent one.

Given the importance that is placed on transmission, lineage, and the pure origins of the teachings, one may come to the conclusion that the Buddhism practiced in Tibet looks upon innovation as a somewhat embarrassing byproduct that ensues in the process of maintaining orthodox doctrine and, by extension, pre-existing power structures. Such a conclusion does, however, not take into account the sheer magnitude of the literary output of Tibetan authors, which by far exceeds what would be prudent if the above were considered the main objectives to writing. Moreover, Tibetan Buddhist authors do, as we have seen, deliberately seek to generate an impression of novelty, innovation, and originality in their writing.

Tsongkhapa gives us the impression that his Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction was communicated to him, exclusively, by Mañjuśrī, whereas Mikyö Dorje fundamentally transforms Mabja's text within a discourse of a seemingly orthodox return to the teaching of the early masters. In both cases, we are faced with accounts that in the modern academic context would call for prompt correction, if not condemnation. Is this evidence that we find in our texts just an oddity, a strange and perhaps rather uncharming fact about the cultural history of Tibet? There may be considerably more for us to acknowledge here than curious facts, for while it is quite inconceivable that nobody in Tibet ever noticed these uses of Mabja,[203] indeed, nobody really objected – at least not in the forceful and decisive way that would have been the case in the modern academy. It must, in other words, in the traditional Tibetan context have been quite permissible to do what Tsongkhapa and Mikyö Dorje did – at least if one was Tsongkhapa or Mikyö Dorje.

This latter qualification may give us a hint at how we might best interpret the otherwise almost inexplicable failure of traditional authors and commentators (who were, of course, at times highly polemical) to point out such blatant lack of respect for the basic facts. The Mahāyāna tradition often reminds its followers that great beings, buddhas and mahābodhisattvas, teach a Dharma that is a mere display of skillful means for the benefit of beings. Scripture is an entrance point to the Dharma, but as the teachers become increasingly exposed to and familiar with the ultimately inexpressible facts of *saṃsāra*, *nirvāṇa*, and the path, their teaching becomes correspondlingly less reliant on the fixtures of scripture.[204] For those who do not enjoy such unmediated access to reality, the medium of text is of paramount importance, yet, for someone who has matured in the perception of things as they are (Skt. *yathābhūta*, Tib. *dngos po'i gnas lugs*), the teaching is primarily delivered based on, and by means of, such experience. In fact, all words and sentences that are genuinely informed by this direct encounter with the nature of things will in the end be quite indistinguishable from the speech of the Tathāgata. In the *Sūtra on Transcendent Insight in Eight Thousand Lines* (Skt. *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*), Śāriputra wonders whether Subhūti's

exposition of the Dharma should be considered the latter's own production, or whether it is the Buddha who is to be credited. Aware of Śāriputra's concern, Subhūti replies:

> Venerable Śāriputra, all that the Blessed One's listeners declare, teach, explain, express, clarify, or describe should be known to be the power of that individual who is the Thus-gone One. Why? Because those listeners have trained in the Dharma teaching that is given by the Thus-gone One, and so they have come to witness the intrinsic nature of phenomena (Skt. *dharmatā*, Tib. *chos nyid*). Thus, they uphold [the teaching]. Once they directly perceive the intrinsic nature and, thus, uphold [the teaching], there is absolutely nothing that they declare, teach, explain, express, clarify, or describe that is in conflict with the intrinsic nature. Venerable Śāriputra, also the teaching of such children of noble family, which reveals the intrinsic nature and is not in conflict with the intrinsic nature, is the natural expression (Skt. *niṣyanda*, Tib. *rgyu mthun pa*) of the Thus-gone One's teaching.[205]

It does not seem an exaggeration to say that in the Mahāyāna religious context no scripture receives a worship more intense than the *Sūtra on Transcendent Insight in Eight Thousand Lines*. Nevertheless, in the passage above this "Mother of the Buddhas" declares that perfect scripture continues to emerge from the mouth of any follower of the teachings who has gained direct perception of *dharmatā* and remains true to it. The apparent discrepancies in word and meaning are indeed just apparent, and as the "teaching of realization" (Skt. *adhigamanirdeśa*, Tib. *rtogs pa'i bstan pa*) so continues to spurn "teaching of scripture" (Skt. *āgamanirdeśa*, Tib. *lung gyi bstan pa*),[206] the innovations and transformations that disciples may sense must in the end simply be seen as distinct ways of guiding followers to that perfect encounter with the nature of things, which brings the Buddha's awakening.

Resembling Subhūti's revelation of that which had elsewhere only been indicated, it seems that for scholars of Tsongkhapa's and Mikyö Dorje's stature what mattered most was not simple accord with the textual heritage, but rather the ability to account for the deeper meanings and implications of scripture. Within this hermeneutical process, innovation and creative transformation was to be expected, and such elements were, I suggest, essentially more *part of* the scholarly tradition than actually opposed to it. From the perspective of their readers, deeply revered religious leaders such as Tsongkhapa and Mikyö Dorje ought not to resolve central matters through simple citation. Rather, they were expected to display their superior insights and perception of *dharmatā* through a discourse that was free to bend scripture almost in the way that solid rock may be treated as soft clay in the hands of a *siddha*. Hence, while pointing out apparent textual discrepancies was certainly practiced in the at times highly polemical debates that emerged subsequent to Mabja's time, simple reference to differences with the textual tradition could, even if they were severe, never have the same decisive consequences as in the modern academy.

To find concern for innovation and originality as positive qualities in the literature of Tibet may not come as a surprise, for we can relatively easily acknowledge that two mutually conflicting and yet equally indispensable elements are involved in the formulation of Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine. On the one hand, authors who see themselves as participants in a Mahāyāna tradition must succeed in expressing a strong resonance with a time-transcending condition of pure perfection, i.e. the Buddha, and in so doing as well position themselves as one among the many who have come to see the truth of the Dharma, which is held to be this Buddha's expression. On the other hand, to achieve such a sense of alignment with a perfectly unblemished and world-transcending tradition, Mahāyāna authors need themselves to express an element of revelation in their writing, and to achieve this they must, in turn, be able to stand out. The moment that the move beyond pure citation of scripture occurs, they therefore cannot simply follow general suit, but must, in seeking to adhere to the tradition, in fact also create a *contrast* to what has been said elsewhere. In matters of philosophy, this then entails developing a take on an issue that prospective readers are likely to find in need of solution.

What this brings us to on a still more basic level is perhaps then the simple fact that discovery and recognition, as two opposing yet symbiotic elements, must be present together if there is to be cognition. Certainly nothing could be known if all were new and entirely unprecedented, and yet if everything were just as it ever was, cognition would remain impossible too. This dual and conflictive requirement – the simultaneous experience of the unknown and the known – may be seen as a restriction on consciousness. Yet, without its fulfillment, experience would be precluded. The human mind must hence express itself within and by means of this interdependence.

Notes

1 Jayānanda and, to a lesser degree, Prajñākaramati and Atīśa being the obvious exceptions. See Vose 2009b, 17–39.
2 See Chapter 1.1.
3 Dreyfus 2009.
4 Lang 1990.
5 Dreyfus 2009.
6 Dreyfus 2010 discusses philosophical implications of the Madhyamaka interpretation set forth in the *Illuminating Lamp*.
7 *Illuminating Lamp* 132b: *paṇ ḍi ta ha su ma ti'i bshad lugs bris pa*. See Dreyfus 2009.
8 See Chapter 2.1.1.
9 The manuscript here contains a word that to me is illegible. The translation of this sentence is therefore speculative.
10 *Illuminating Lamp* 49b:

> *nged tshad ma khas mi len te tshad ma dang gzhal bya gnyis ga rtsod zlog du bgag pas ste / tshad ma la gzhal bya yod dgos pa la gzhal bya med pa'i pyhir ro // tha snyad pa'i tshad mas grags tshod du 'jal ba dang don dam 'jal ba gnyis yod zer na / myi 'thad de tha snyad pa'i tshad mar 'dod pa des rtogs pa'i don la tshad ma yin phan cod tshad ma gzhan gyis mi gnod pas / de yang dag du 'gyur bas na tha*

snyad pa'i tshad ma [short illegible word] *dang gnyis med kyi / tshad ma gcig grub phan cad des don bden par 'gyur bas na tshad ma gang yang med ste mkhas mi len to //.*

11 It is not quite clear from the passage above whether the objector wishes to restrict the relevance of *pramāṇa*s to convention only, or alternatively simply draw a distinction between two types of *pramāṇa*. From the point of view advanced in the *Illuminating Lamp*, both of these moves are, however, equally non-yielding, because the notion of *pramāṇa* is simply irreconcilable with Madhyamaka. As the text repeatedly argues: (*Illuminating Lamp* 43b):

> That which is established by a reliable means of cognition can [by definition] not be impaired any other reliable means of cognition. Hence the subject, etc. [that is involved in the application of reliable means of cognition] would turn out to be established as the ultimate truth, and they could then not reasonably be devoid of nature.
>
> *tshad mas grub pa la tshad ma gzhan kyi mi gnod na chos can la tsogs pa don dam pa'i bden par grub par thal bas rang bzhin med par myi 'thad do //.*

12 *Rebuttal of Dispute* 29.

13 41–42:

> *yang kha cig / gal te ngas dam bcas 'ga' yod // de nas nga la skyon de yod // nga la dam bca' med pas na // nga ni skyon med kho na yin // ces pa'i tshul gyis dbu ma pa la rang phyogs khas blang rgyu'i lta ba ci yang med pas de phab byed kyi tshad ma'ang med la/ gzhan gyis brtags pa'i mtha' thams cad khas len nang'gal gyi thal 'gyur gyi 'gog pa yin no zhes zer ro /.*

14 We may in this context also note that, whereas the *Illuminating Lamp* enumerates five "collections of Madhyamaka reasoning" (Tib. *dbu ma rigs pa'i tshogs*) (*Illuminating Lamp* 33b–34a), Mabja elaborately argues that there are six such works by Nāgārjuna (*Ornament of Reason* 13–17).

15 *The Appearance of Reality* 780:

> *kha cig dag gal te sngar tshad ma bkag pa da 'dir khas len pa ji ltar mi 'gal zhing yang tshad mar don dam pa ba rang rgyud pa dag kyang mi 'dod pa kun rdzob pa thal ba pa yang 'dod na 'di gnyis la khyad par ci yod snyam na /.*

16 Several of the manuscripts published in 2006 (dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang 2006. *Selected Works of the Kadampas I* (*bKa gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs theng dangs po*). Vols. 1–30. Khreng tu'u: Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang) contain multiple layers of annotations, some of which are elaborate and appear to express intimate knowledge of the relevant author's thought. The comparatively less formal format of the annotations noticeably also invites identification of many of the *pūrvapakṣas*, which in the main text simply go unnamed. While it is difficult to determine their chronology, careful research of these layers of annotation may significantly advance our understanding of the intellectual cliamate in Tibet from the eleventh to the fourteenth century.

17 In Mabja's day such overt and dramatic disagreements may not have been as striking as they would in more recent centuries. Thus Mabja also himself, while clearly considering Candrakīrti to be the foremost Indian commentator on Nāgārjuna's works, twice in the *Ornament of Reason* points out what he considers to be problematic lines of reasoning in the *Clear Words*.

18 Śākya Chokden similarly notes Tsang-nakpa's strong criticism of his teacher, Chapa (see Ruegg 2000, 38 n. 71).

19 See p. 13 n. 8.

20 *Explanation of the Root of the Middle Way* 24 (cf. Ruegg 2000, 200).

21 *Light Rays of the Authentic View* 14b (cf. Ruegg 2000, 159–60); *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*, 77a–b (cf. Ruegg 2000, 159–60 n. 72).

22 Ruegg 2000, 188–89.

23 *Ascertainment of the Middle Way* vol. 2 544:

> *dbu ma chen po rma bya'i gsung gi bdud rtsi gis / pa tshab lo tsā ba'i gsung bdud rtsi 'chad pa ni 'di skad ces*.

24 Let us note that all these authors take the relevance of *pramāṇa* for the Madhyamaka as a given, and that they likewise all see Candrakīrti's interpretation as flawless. Given his crucial role in the transmission of Candrakīrti's texts, it might then seem somewhat undesirable to stand in blatant opposition to Patsab's own Candrakīrti interpretation.

25 As mentioned in the text's colophon (p. 137b: *paṇ ḍi ta ha su ma ti'i bshad lugs*).

26 A particularly striking example of this seemingly disproportionate lack of sophistication is perhaps the *Illuminating Lamp's* reply (35b–36a) to the charge that conventional dependent origination (Tib. *rten 'brel*) contradicts ultimate non-origination (Tib. *skye med*). The text here simply states that such a contradiction would ensue only if the bases (Tib. *gzhi*) for the identification of dependent origination and non-origination were one and the same. Since, however, the affirmation and the negation pertain to distinct bases, their enumeration is just as unproblematic as the description of two different women as, respectively, "mother" and "childless." No further explanation or supportive argumentation is offered, and the issue is apparently thereby considered resolved. It is somewhat hard to imagine that anyone with a more than minimal familiarity with Madhyamaka epistemology would ascribe any persuasive force to such an argument.

27 Jayānanda's *Commentary on Entering the Middle Way* is in fact a *ṭīka* to Candrakīrti's auto-commentary.

28 On Jayānanda and his Madhyamaka, see the references mentioned in p. 5 n. 10.

29 Cf. *The Appearance of Reality* 746–47 and 768–77. Note, for example, how the *Logic Hammer's* opening stanza closely resembles verses 11b–c in the root stanzas of *The Appearance of Reality*.

30 See p. 69ff.

31 *Commentary on Entering the Middle Way* 120a:

> *de la 'ga' shig na re gal te thal 'gyur gtan tshigs su 'dod na tshad mas grub pa yin nam / 'on te ma grub pa yin / de la gal te phyogs dang po ltar na de'i tshe gnyis ka la grub pa yin pas gzhan gyis khas blangs pa zhes ci ltar brjod / phyogs gnyis pa ltar gzhan gyis khas len pa mi 'os pa yin pas gzhan gyis khas blangs pa zhes ji ltar brjod ce na /*.

32 The emphasis is my own.

33 *Commentary on Entering the Middle Way* 120a–b:

> *de la lan ni tshad mas grub pa gang yin pa de gnyis ka la grub pa yin no zhes pa de nyid kho bos mi shes te / 'di ltar rgol bas sgrub byed bkod pa'i dus na gtan tshigs 'god pa de la tshad mas grub pa yin grang / gzhan la tshad mas grub par des ci ltar shes te / gzhan gyi sems kyi khyad par mngon sum dang / rjes su dpag pa'i yul pa* (*sic*) *yin pa'i phyir ro / rang nyid la yang tshad mas grub par ci ltar shes te / 'khrul pa rgyu mtshan gyis dus ring po nas bzung ba'i phyir slu ba 'drid pas so // de phyir rgol ba dang / phyir rgol ba dag gyis tshad ma nyid du khas blangs pa'i stobs kyis dngos po rnams kyi rang bzhin khas len pa yin no / des na gzhan gyis khas blangs pa'i sgo nas gzhan gyi phyogs sun 'byin par rigs pa yin no /*.

34 Ibid. 120b:

gzhan yang rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs kyi phyogs la gal te gtan tshigs dang / bsgrub par bya ba dag la tshad mas khyab pa grub na de'i tshe rang rgyud sgrub byed du 'gyur ba yin la / 'on kyang khyab pa ma grub ste / 'di ltar khyab pa bsgrub par byed pa'i tshad ma ni mngon sum mam rjes su dpag pa yin no // de la re zhig mngon sum gyis khyab pa mi 'grub ste / 'di ltar tshang bar du mngon sum dang mi dmigs pa dag gis me dang du ba dag la / 'di yod na 'di byung la / 'di med ne 'di mi 'byung bar rtogs kyi / yul thams cad la yod pa ni ma yin no // rjes su dpag pas kyang ma yin te / de yang yul nges pa can yin pas so // 'di ltar rjes su dpag pa'i yul ni thams cad ma yin te / gang gi phyir gang na bsgrub par bya ba dang 'brel pa'i rtags yod pa de kho na mi rtag pa la sogs pa shes pa skye bar 'gyur ba yin gyi / yul dang dus thams cad du ma yin no // des na 'jig rten pas khas blangs pa tsam gyi sgo nas khyab pa grub pa yin gyi tshad mas ni ma yin pas thal 'gyur gyi gtan tshigs kyis gzhan gyi phyogs sun 'byin pa ci ltar mi rigs she'o //

35 *Logic Hammer* 5d–6d. See above, p. 24 and p. 95 n. 29.
36 *Commentary on Entering the Middle Way* 113b–15b.
37 Cf. ibid. 115b, which cites Dharmakīrti's *Commentary on Reliable Means of Cognition* I.216–17. Mabja cites an almost identical version of I. 216 in the introductory section of the *Ornament of Reason* (31–32).
38 For these reasons I must disagree with Vose (2010: 559) when he writes that Jayānanda "reads Candrakīrti as embodying a return to a different kind of *pramāṇa*: rather than seeking valid means of cognition, Jayānanda advocates the authority of Nāgārjuna as the sole means by which one can come to understand emptiness."
39 We may in this regard also recall Shönnu Pal's comment that Mabja was particularly inspired by Jayānanda's teaching (see p. 7).
40 *Commentary on Entering the Middle Way* 145b:

'dir sgrib pa ni rnam pa gnyis te / nyon mongs pa can gyi dang / nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'i ma rig pa'o // de la nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa ni 'khor ba'i rgyun 'jug pa'i rgyu yin la / nyon mongs pa can ma yin pa'i ma rig pa ni gzugs la sogs pa snang ba'i rgyu yin no // bcom ldan 'das rnams la ni sgrib pa gnyis ka mi mnga' bas rgyu med pas 'bras bu med pa'i phyir 'khor ba dang gzugs la sogs pa dag snang ba med pa'i phyir ji ltar kun rdzob tsam snang bar 'gyur /.

41 See Chapter 1.1.
42 See Chapter 1.1.
43 *Ascertainment of the Middle Way* vol. 1 518.
44 This section is translated and studied in Vose 2009b.
45 On Chapa's Madhyamaka and *pramaṇa* theory, see the references mentioned in p. 5 n. 8.
46 See p. 27.
47 *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* 66:

dbu ma pa la bsgrub du myed pas rtags 'god pa mi rigs so zhe na / pha rol po la shes bya'i gshis dang mi mthun pa'i log rtogs myed pas de 'gog pa'i thal ba brjod pa mi rigs so // don dam pa'i dngos por 'dod pa shes bya'i gshis dang mi mthun pa'i log rtogs yin no zhe na / 'o na don dam pa'i dngos pos stong ba shes bya'i gshis su khas blangs pa dam bca' med pa nyams so //

48 *The Appearance of Reality* 27b–d (746):

rang gzhan ltos grub yin pas rang phyogs ni // med pas gzhan phyogs yod min de yi phyir // khyod ni ci zhig 'gog nas ngal bar 'gyur // Cf. pp. 22–23.

49 It must here be recalled that for Mabja "inference as agreed upon by others" (Tib. *gzhan grags kyi rjes dpag*) is not only relevant to the opposition but at the conventional level also to the Mādhyamikas themselves. See Chapter 2.2.

50 42:

> *'jig rten nam pha rol la grags pa'i tshad ma tsam yang khas mi len na rang phyogs kun rdzob tsam du snang la rang bzin med pa sgyu ma lta bu'i rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba gzhag pa mi 'grub pa dang / gzhan phyogs tha snyad du med pa dang / yang dag par yod pa'i mtha mi bden par shes byed med pas gzhan phyogs 'gog 'dod kyi blo mi 'jug cing / phyogs chos khyab pa bsal ba gsum khas blangs par shes byed med pas thal 'gyur rgol ba'i yul mi 'grub la / pha rol pa'i ngag snga phyi 'gal bar shes byed med pas yul la thal ba nyid mi 'grub pas gzhan phyogs thal 'gyur gyis 'gog pa'ang mi thad do //.*

51 Cf. Vose 2009b, 55–56 and 80–81.
52 *The Appearance of Reality* 767:

> *stong pa mtshan mar lta ba'i dbu ma pa kha cig gang zag dang chos kyi bdag thams cad bkag pa'i stong nyid rigs shes kyi yul na yod pa yin te / de ltar ma yin na shes bya dang gzhal bya med pas rigs shes pa dang tshad ma ma yin par 'gyur zhing dgag bya bden dngos grub par yang 'gyur ro zhes smra'o // de ltar stong nyid yang dag par 'dod pa 'di yang dgag bya yin te / de la zhen pas kyang thar pa mi thob pas dgag dgos pa'i phyir dang / yul rigs pas dpyad na mi rnyed pas dgag nus pa'i phyir ro //.*

53 Ruegg 2000, 38 n. 71.
54 This identification is moreover also made in the annotations to the *The Appearance of Reality* (*The Appearance of Reality* 767 and 788).
55 *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* 20: *spros bral shes bya ma yin na ha cang thal ba*.
56 For Chapa (*The Middle Way of the Three Easterners*, 87) *prasajyapratiṣedha* is defined as "exclusive negation" (Tib. *dgag pa 'ba' zhig*) and he objects (1999, 85–87) to the understanding of such a negation as "non-implicative" (Tib. *dgag bya bkag nas chos gzhan mi 'phen pa*). See Hugon (forthcoming).
57 Let us once more note that, while the term obviously implies very different things for the two thinkers, both Chapa and Mabja use "rational cognition" (Tib. *rigs shes*) to refer to a type of reasoned cognition, which in relating to the ultimate truth is distinguished from inference (Skt. *anumāna*, Tib. *rjes dpag*) in general.
58 *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* 66: *dngos 'gal gnyis ni gcig bkag pa nyid gcig shos bsgrub pa yin*.
59 Cf., e.g., ibid. 66–67.
60 Ibid. 25.
61 Ibid. 25–26:

> *bden pa'i rang bzhin gyis stong ba de ngo bo gang du'ang ma grub pas khyad par mtha' dag gis stong ba yin la / des na de la khyad par dpyad du myed pas khyad par dpyad pas bden zhen ldog pa ma yin pas de dpyad bzod pa yin la / de 'jal ba'i tshad ma mthar thug 'jal ba'i tshad ma yin la bden pa'i rang bzhin gyis stong pa'ang mthar thug 'jal ba'i yul du bden pa yin pas don dam pa'i bden pa'i tha snyad rten par mtshon pa'i mtshan gzhi'o //*

62 Ibid. 87.
63 Ibid. 17: *ci'ang ma grub pa'i thar thug na cir yang ma grub par nges pas*.
64 Ibid.
65 According to Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* (VI.139–40) only that which resists physical destruction and mental dissection can be ascribed ultimate reality.
66 *The Middle Way of the Three Easterners* 24:

> *mtshan gzhi tha dad yod pa ma yin te chos thams cad don dam pa'i rdzas su'ang mtshon du rung la / kun rdzob kyi bden pa'i rdzas su mtshon du rung pa'ang yin*

no / ... shes bya ma lus pa gzhir bya ste / spros bral du gtan la 'bebs pa'i tshad ma la ltos nas mthar thug 'jal ba'i tshad ma'i yul du bden pa'i rdzas yin pas don dam bden pa'i rdzas su'ang mtshon du rung la / ma yin dgag nges pa'i blo la ltos nas mthar thug mi 'jal ba'i yul du bden pa'i rdzas yin pas kun rdzobs kyi bden pa'i rdzas su'ang mtshon du rung ste / blo de la ltos te don dam pa'i bden par grub pas blo de la ltos pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa yin pa khegs kyang blo gzhan la ltos pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa yin pa mi khegs la / yang blo de la ltos pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa yin par grub pas kyang blo de ltos nas don dam gyi bden pa yin pa khegs kyi gzhan la ltos pa don dam gyi bden pa yin pa mi khegs pa'i phyir te / me du ba ltos nas rgyu yin yang bud shing gi 'bras bur mi 'gal ba bzhin no //.

67 See ibid. 15.

68 Ibid.:

rtag pa'i dngos por zhen pa lta bu shes bya la mi srid pa la srid par zhen pa'i 'khrul pa dang bzla ba gnyis dang don spyi la sogs par snang ba lta bu don byed pas stong ba gzung yul du byed pa'i 'khrul pa la sgrib pas khyab kyang de sangs rgyas la mi mnga' bas. Cf. Vose 2009b, 128–30.

69 See ibid. 73–76. On Chapa's insistence on the unbroken continuity of appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) as well as primary and subsidiary mind states (Skt. *cittacaitta*, Tib. *sems dang sems byung*) at the level of Buddhahood, see Vose 2009b, 123–31.

70 Cf. *Ornament of Reason* 168–71 and 265–66.

71 See, e.g., Vose 2009b.

72 Cf. *Ornament of Reason* 41–42.

73 *Illuminating Lamp* 39a:

don gnyis pa ngag gyi don gyi sgo nas bshad pa la bzhi ste / rang bzhin med pa sgrub pa la dngos po smra ba rnam kyis brtsad pa dgod pa dang / brtsad pa de'i lan rang rgyud du smra ba'i dbu ma pas gdab cing rang rgyud gi 'dod pa brjod pa dang / rang rgyud pa'i bsam pa blang te zla grags nyid kyis sun dbyung ba dang / klu grub kyi dgongs pa thal 'gyur smra ba'i dbu ma nyid du zla ba grags pa rang gis 'dod pa brjod pa'o //.

The author thus extensively argues that all the classical proofs of emptiness (such as the "argument from absence of one and many," Tib. *gcig du bral kyi gtan tshigs*) are deficient if construed as per the understanding of the Svātantrikas. Instead, to decisively answer the objections of the realists, these same arguments must be understood as *prasaṅgas*, just as it is held and explained by Candrakīrti.

74 Tib. *thal ba pa*. See p. 15 n. 44. It is noteworthy that this and an immediately preceeding *pūrvapakṣa* are the only occasions, in both *The Appearance of Reality* and *Ornament of Reason*, where a variant of the term *thal 'gyur pa* occurs.

75 *The Appearance of Reality* 780:

tshad ma bkag pa ni rang rgyud pa dang thal ba pa dag tshad ma grangs mi mthun par zad kyi ngo bo la mi mthun pa med do //.

76 When delineating the view of the Svātantrikas, who according to Mabja characteristically hold that fact-based (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*, Tib. *dngos po'i stobs zhugs*) reasoning enjoys access to the ultimate truth, Mabja distinguishes two subschools (*The Appearance of Reality* 768): "Some here assert that the ultimate truth is a fully qualified object of rational cognition whereas others hold it to be [merely] nominally so" (*de la kha cig don dam rigs shes kyi yul mtshan nyid par 'dod la kha cig btags pa bar 'dod do*). According to an annotation, the former opinion is Chapa's. The representative of the latter position is according to the annotation, "Tsang-nak, who holds that the absence of constructs refers to the mere lack of finding any" (*rtsang* (*sic*) *nag spros pa ma rnyed tsam la spros bral zhal zhes*). Hence, if the attribution is correct,

Tsang-nakpa, who is otherwise known for both his vocal critique of Chapa (Ruegg 2000, 38 n. 71) and explicit acceptance of Candrakīrti (Shönnu Pal's *Blue Annals* 406:

> *slob dpon phywa bas slob dpon zla ba grags pa la dgag pa mang du mdzad pa la / gtsang nag pas ni dpal ldan zla ba grags pa'i gzhung lugs la / sbyang pa'i stobs kyis gzhung don nges gyur pa / nga 'dra skye bo slan chad 'byung mi 'gyur / gsung nas / dbu ma'i sdus pa'ang che phra mang du mdzad pa rnams zla ba grags pa'i lugs yin /*),

would have held a view that, despite Tsang-nakpa's allegiance to Candrakīrti, on Mabja's interpretation still did not qualify as the view of the "great Madhyamaka" (Tib. *dbu ma chen po*) because of an uncritical adherence to traditional Buddhist *pramāṇa* theory on behalf of Tsang-nakpa. Tsang-nakpa's Madhyamaka would, we may then surmise, in other words distinguish itself by interpreting Candrakīrti in a way that does not find the latter in any fundamental disagreement with the approaches of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. Let us note that ascribing such a view to Tsang-nakpa would be in accord with the citations of Tsang-nakpa and references to his position that appear in Gorampa's *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*. Cf., e.g., 103b–04a where Gorampa aligns Tsang-nakpa with Chapa and concludes that neither of them seem to have realized the key points of the Prāsaṅgika approach:

> *cha pa dang gtsang nag pas don dam gnas lugs la dpyod pa'i tshe rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs dang / chos can mthun snang du grub pa yod pa bkod pa de dag thams cad rgol phyir rgol dpyad pa ma zhugs pa'i gong du chos can mthun snang du grub pa yod kyang gtan tshigs bkod pa med la / gtan tshigs bkod pa'i tshe snga rgol gyi chos can de'i gnas lugs rtogs nas phyi rgol la ston pa'i skabs yin pas blo de'i ngor chos can mthun snang du grub pa yod na bden grub las ma 'das pa'i thal 'gyur pa'i gnad chen po ma zin par snang ngo //.*

In my preliminary readings of Tsang-nakpa's newly available *Commentary to Entering the Bodhisattva Conduct* (on this commentary, see Vose 2009a) I have not found any counter-evidence that would call such a conclusion into question.

77 *The Appearance of Reality* 780:

> *zhes zer ba ni blo mi gsal bas shin tu phra ba'i gnas ma rtogs pa'i rnam 'gyur du zad de / kun rdzob tu dngos po stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma yod na des phyogs chos khyab pa grub pa'i rang rgyud kyi rtags gang gis dgag / kun rdzob tu rang rgyud kyi rtags 'dod na de nyid rang rgyud pa yin pas thal 'gyur gyi ming tsam la zhen nas gzhan 'gog pa'i ngal ba 'dis ci zhig bya ste /.*

78 Cf. ibid 780:

> the Autonomist assertions about meanings (Skt. *artha*, Tib. *don*), arguments (Skt. *hetu*, Tib. *gtan tshigs*), and *probanda* (Skt. *sādhya*, Tib. *bsgrub bya*) are all in terms of imagined, conceptual distinctions of sameness or difference. Hence, since the single conceptual distinctions [that they operate with] do for the Autonomists not actually exist, they assert that, within the particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*, Tib. *rang gi mtshan nyid*), arguments and *probanda* do not have any existence, even in terms of the relative. And what sort of follower of the Middle Way would take arguments and *probanda* to be ultimate?
>
> *dbu ma rang rgyud smra ba rnams ni blos ldog pa gcig dang tha dad du brtags pa la ltos nas don dang gtan tshig dang bsgrub byar 'gyur bar 'dod kyi ldog pa gcig don la med pas kun rdzob tu yang rang gi mtshan nyid la yang gtan tshig dang bsgrub bya med par 'dod nas rang rgyud kyi rtags dang bsgrub bya don dam par 'dod pa'i dbu ma ba su zhig yod / ji skad du … .*

(the text next cites Śāntarakṣita and Dharmakīrti as examples of the Svātantrika stance).

79 Note the similarity with the point that we earlier saw argued (p. 49) in the *Illuminating Lamp* (49b):

> It may be objected: "There are two issues: 1) evaluation by conventional reliable means of cognition in accordance with what is accepted [in the world] and 2) ultimate evaluation." Yet that is untenable, because, given that the allegedly conventional means of valid cognition is held to be valid (Skt. *pramā*) with respect to the object it realizes, it cannot be impaired by any other reliable means of cognition, and so it turns out to be ultimate [rather than conventional].
>
> *tha snyad pa'i tshad mas grags tshod du 'jal ba dang don dam 'jal ba gnyis yod zer na / myi 'thad de tha snyad pa'i tshad mar 'dod pa des rtogs pa'i don la tshad ma yin phan cod tshad ma gzhan gyis mi gnod pas / de yang dag du 'gyur bas na*.

80 Cf., e.g., Cabezón's (2003) discussion of "soft" versus "hard" doxographers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

81 Cf. below, Chapter 3.2.2. See also Vose 2009b.

82 As our knowledge of early Tibetan Madhyamaka expands (in particular in view of the current emergence of previously unavailable texts), we may of course very well find authors closer to Mabja's time who share this general perception of exclusively Prāsaṅgika being able to account for the Madhyamaka view.

83 Longchen Rabjam's Madhyamaka interpretation (or interpretations, more accurately, for the individual treatments differ significantly) has only recently caught the attention of non-Tibetan scholars (see e.g Arguillère 2007). In the following I consider exclusively Longchenpa's treatment of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction as it appears in the *White Lotus* auto-commentary to his *Wishfullfilling Treasury* (Tib. *Yid bzhin mdzod*), an encyclopaedic text that contains a large chapter on "tenets" (Skt. *siddhānta*, Tib. *grub mtha'*) (pp. 672–1207). Longchenpa here critiques a hierarchy of non-Buddhist and Buddhist philosophical systems from the perspective of his Prāsaṅgika interpretation, leading in this way up to an elaborate discussion of the distinction between Svātantrikas (of which he discerns several subschools) and Prāsaṅgikas in the section specifically treating the Madhyamaka (pp. 1116–69). The final section of the tenets chapter (pp. 1169–1207) is devoted to the Vajrayāna views and practices, which Longchenpa, as is typical for authors of the "Old School" (Tib. *rNying ma*), distinguishes as superior to those of the "causal vehicle of characteristics" (Tib. *rgyu mtshan nyid kyi theg pa*). On the doctrine of a superior view taught in the tantras, see Koeppl 2008 and Cabezón 2013.

84 Cf. *White Lotus*, 1141:

> The realization of the Capable One, the Transcendent Conqueror, is unerringly revealed by the Middle Way Consequentialists. As for the one who first established that chariot path, it is he who was prophesized by the Transcendent Conqueror in the *Sūtra of the Great Drum* (*Mahābherīhāraka*), the one who dispels the dense darkness of inferior views with the stainless sun of noble knowledge, the Protector, Nāgārjuna. The meaning of his classic treatises, the six collections of reasoning, is explained by commentators such as Āryadeva, Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka, and Candrakīrti. Among these commentators, he who possesses inalienable wisdom and compassion, Candrakīrti, flawlessly comprehended the intent of the Master and so composed *Entering the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakāvatāra*), the explanation of the meaning of the *Root of the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*), and the *Clear Words* (*Prasannapadā*), which is his explanation of its words. In this way he brought about the rise of the sun of the Middle Way of Consequence, the Buddha's final intent, and thereby dispelled the dense darkness of inferior views.
>
> *thub pa bcom ldan 'das kyi dgong pa phyin ci ma log pa ston pa ni dbu ma thal 'gyur pa yin la / de'i shing rta 'dren pa'i srol 'byed pa thog ma ni bcom ldan 'das*

kyis rnga bo chen po'i mdor lung bstan pa 'phag pa shes rab kyi nyi ma dri ma med pas lta ba ngan pa'i thibs po sel ba mdzad pa dgon po klu sgrub yin te / de'i gzhung rigs pa'i tshogs drug 'grel pa po'ang / 'phag pa lha dang / sangs rgyas bskyang dang / legs ldan byed dang / zla ba grags pa la sogs pa ste / de dag gi nang nas mi 'phrogs pa'i mkhyen pa dang thugs rjer ldan pa 'phags pa zla ba grags pas ni bslob dpon gyi dgong pa phyin ci ma logs par thugs su chud nas dbu ma'i rtsa ba'i don gyi 'grel pa dbu ma la 'jug pa dang / tshigs kyi 'grel pa tshigs gsal mdzad de / 'dzam bu gling du sangs rgyas kyi dgong pa mthar thugs pa dbu ma thal 'gyur gyi nyi ma shar ba mdzad pas / lta ba ngan pa'i thibs po gsal ba byas pa yin no //.

85 Cf. p. 102 n. 97 and the citation just below. On the notion of the two truths as inseparable in the works of Longchenpa and other authors associated with the "Old School" (Tib. *rNying ma*), see Duckworth 2008, Higgins 2013, Koeppl 2008, Mipham 2004, Pettit 2002, and Phuntsho 2007.

86 Thus Longchenpa concludes his critique of the so-called "Higher Svātantrika" (Tib. *rang rgyud gong ma*), represented by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, with the following statement (*White Lotus* 1140):

> Therefore, the present approach does not escape the web of superimposition. Believing that "while in terms of the apparent there is establishment, ultimately there is none" it indeed fails to transcend the extremes of permanence and annihilation, because in this way it retains a form of attachment to a reality of appearance and emptiness.
>
> *des na tshul 'di yang sgro btags kyi gzeb las ma 'das pas snang bar grub / don la ma grub ces pas rtag chad las ma 'das pa nyid de snang stong la bden zhen gyi cha ma bral ba'i phyir ro //.*

87 *White Lotus* 1140–41:

> *'di'i gzhung phyin ci ma logs pa'i don bsdus te brjod pa ni / gshis ngo bor gang yang rang bzhin ma grub pa dang / khas len thams cad bden zhen dang bcas pas na rang bzhin du smra ba dag gi lugs rang gi gzhung nang 'gal ba dang / dngos po stobs zhugs khas len pa po de'i gzhung la grags tshod des 'gog pa yin la / bkag pa'i rjes la rang rgyud pa ltar nges pa'i dam bca' med de /* (citation of Nāgārjuna's *Rebuttal of Dispute* 29).

88 41–42.

89 *White Lotus* 1166–67:

> *de gnyis ka yang phyogs re mthun phyogs la mthong mi mthun phyogs la ma mthong bas / gzhung gi don ma go bar zad mod / 'on kyang skyon gnyis po khas blangs ma blangs gang la'ang yod pas / phyogs gcig tu nges pa'i dam bca' ma yin pas 'dir 'di ltar go bar bya ste / khas len mi len kun rdzob kyi bden pa la yod kyi dbu ma thal 'gyur ba la don dam du khas len mi len dpyad ra med pas na re zhig kun rdzob tha snyad du skabs kyi dbye bas khas len pa dang / mi len pa gnyis su go bar bya'o // de'ang rtsod pa dang don dam yul du byed pa'i tshe snang ba gang yang rang bzhin med pas gshis la yod par khas len med pas phyir khas blang bar bya ba ma yin no // lam rjes thob pa tha snyad yul du byed dus gsung rab las bshad pa ltar rnam dbye dang bcas pa mi lam sgyu ma'i grub mtha' tsam du shes nas rang gis kyang dpyad de bsam zhing / gzhan la'ang bstan pas blang dor gyi dmigs phyed nas lam dbu ma tshogs gnyis la zhugs te bras bu sku gnyis 'grub pa'i dgos pa yod do //*

90 As for the Tsangpa (Tib. *gTsang pa*) that Longchenpa here mentions, the name could possibly, although not very naturally, be read as a short hand for Tsang-nakpa, yet a denial of any views on behalf of the Mādhyamika contrasts with what we know and

hear about the latter's position (see p. 62). We might instead suggest that the reference is to Tsangpa Sarbö (Tib. *gTsang pa sar sbos*), who according to Shönnu Pal was one among Patsab's "four sons" (Tib. *bu bzhi*), yet in the absence of any further evidence this identification remains of course speculative.

91 *White Lotus* 1168:

> *lugs 'di gnyis snga rabs pa dag gis ma phyed pas gtsang pa ni khas mi len la / rma bya ni len par snang ste gnyis ka legs chos re dang skyon re dmigs pa'i phyir gzhung ji lta bar bzhin gyi don cung zad ma dgong par snang ngo // 'di ni rnam par dpyod pa'i blo gros dang gzhung lugs phal po che mthong ba las byung ba'i dmig rgyas pas gzhung na gab cing thor ba'i don gsal por phye ba yin no // phyin cad dam bca' 'di 'cha' shes pa rnam ni kho bo'i gzhung 'di'i mthus shes par bya'o //*

92 See Chapter 2.2.4.

93 See p. 64.

94 This translation of the expression *lung pa 'tshol ba* remains tentative.

95 *White Lotus* 1166:

> *don la med la tha snyad du yod pa 'gal ba 'dzin pas lung pa 'tshol ba dang / khas len tha snyad las don dam par 'og ma rnams las gong ma su zhig khas len / yod med rdzas 'gal bas so ma zin grub mtha' 'di ni dbu ma chen po'i lugs ma yin no //.*

96 See *White Lotus* 1164.

97 Cf., e.g., *White Lotus*:

> Something empty that does not appear is impossible throughout the two truths. If something is unsuited to appear to anyone then it has no features, and that which even relatively has no features is refuted in the same way that space is.

> *snang ba ma yin pa'i stong pa ni bden pa gnyis kar mi srid de / su la'ang snang du mi rung na rnam pa med pa yin zhing rnam pa kun rdzob du'ang med pa'i phyir nam mkha bkag pa bzhin no //.*

Cf. p. 101 n. 85.

98 Although I do not quite know what to make of this, it is noteworthy that in Longchenpa's works references to the positions of Tibetans occur very rarely, and hardly ever with mention of their name. The reference to Tsangpa and Mabja in the passage cited above is in this way highly exceptional.

99 See the passage just cited, as well as 1165–66:

> The view that [Mādhyamikas] hold claims is expressed as follows: "Ultimately nothing whatsoever is established, and hence nothing is claimed. In terms of the relative, all the categorizations of phenomena are accepted just as they are taught."

> *khas len pa'i rnam gzhag ltar na / don dam par gang yang ma grub pas khas blang med la / kun rdzob tu chos rnams kyis rnam par gzhag pa ji ltar gsung pa bzhin khas len to zhes*.

100 A comprehensive exposition and study of Tsongkhapa's Madhyamaka in relation to both its Indian sources and the approaches of several other influential Tibetan Mādhyamikas can be found in Tauscher 1995. For an incisive discussion of Tsongkhapa's view of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika differences, see Tillemans 1992. Several of Tsongkhapa's key texts on Madhyamaka are available in English translation (see Tsongkhapa 1984, 2002, and 2006).

101 *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 425a–b:

> *slob dpon legs ldan 'byed la sogs pa chos rnams la rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang gi mtshan nyid tha snyad du bzhed pa'i dbu ma pa rnams rang rgyud kyi rtags rang gi lugs la zhal gyis bzhes pa'i rgyu mtshan yang tha snyad du rang gi ngo bos grub*

pa'i rang mtshan yod pa 'di yin pas rang rgyud kyi rtags rang gi lugs la zhal gyis bzhes pa'i rgyu mtshan yang tha snyad du / rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang mtshan yod pa 'di yin pas rang rgyud kyi rtags rang lugs la 'jog mi 'jog ni dgag bya shin tu phra ba 'di la thug pa yin no //.

(Cf. Taushcher 1995, 122–23).

102 *des na khong rnam pa'i lugs la rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang bzhin snang ba'i dbang shes gnod med rnams kyang tha snyad du snang yul la ma 'khrul la / de lta bu'i rang bzhin myu gu sogs la yod par 'dzin pa'i rtog pa'ang zhen yul la ma 'khrul ba yin te /.*

103 Cf. Chapter 2.1.3.

104 *Essence of True Eloquence* 172–73:

> For some [who believe themselves Mādhyamikas] anything being established by reliable means of cognition is a complete impossibility, and for them [the Mādhyamikas] hence refute their opponents' distorted ideas by the drawing of consequences (Skt. *prasaṅga*) of their opponent's explicit or implicit assertions. They moreover understand the absence of autonomous arguments (Skt. *svatantra-hetu*/*liṅga*) and theses (Skt. *pratijñā*) to imply that the absence of truth, in the sense of the mere exclusion (Skt. *vyavaccheda*) of truth, is not to be established.
>
> *yang kha cig tshad mas grub pa'i don thams cad du med pas pha rol pos khas blangs pa'am khas blangs pa'i mthar thug pa la brten pa'i thal 'gyur gyis log rtog 'gog la / bden pa rnam par bcad tsam gyi bden med bsgrub rgyu med pa rang rgyud kyi rtags dang dam bca' med pa'i don du 'dod do //.*

105 Tsongkhapa 1984 (326 n. 112 and 113) here refers to a certain Losang Phüntsok (Tib. *Blo bzang phun tshogs*), whose *Memorandum on the Essence of True Eloquence* (Tib. *Drang nges rnam 'byed kyi zin bris*) identifies Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü and Khu Dodebar as representatives of this group. Tauscher 1995 (155–56), however, doubts this attribution, given that Tsongkhapa later in the passage specifies that this account is merely a more recent phenomenon.

106 *Essence of True Eloquence* 172–73:

> *gzhan dag kun rdzob dang don dam la brtsam pa'i rnam gzhag thams cad gzhan ngor smras kyi rang lugs min no de skad pa de yang rang gis ma byas kyi gzhan gyi ngor snang ba tsam mo zhes smras ste / 'di ni sngon kyi rang rgyud 'gog pa rnams la med kyi phyis kyi rnams kyis smras pa tsam mo // de dag gi kha cig gis ni lugs 'di'i thun mong ma yin pa'i dgag bya khas blang la phal mo ches ni rten 'brel tshad mas grub pa yang bkag pas lugs 'di'i phyogs snga ma'i gtso bor snang ngo //.*

Translation and discussion in Tauscher 1995: 155–56 and Tsongkhapa 1984.

107 Translated in Tsongkhapa 2001, 2002, and 2004.

108 See Williams 1985 and Ruegg 2000, 187–94.

109 *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 436b:

> *sngon gyi dbu ma pa slob dpon zla ba'i rjes su 'brang ba'i bod kyi mkhas pa kha cig ni de ltar dbu ma pa la rang lugs kyi phyogs dang de dag sgrub byed kyi tshad ma med pa'i lugs rnams legs par sun phyung nas / rang gi lugs ni // rigs pas rnams par dpyad pa'i rang gi mtshan nyid kyis gzhal bya dang tshad ma'i rnam gzhag khas len pa'i dngos po stob zhugs kyi tshad ma mngon rjes gnyis ka bkag nas / tha snyad du ma dpyad pa'i 'jig rten grags pa'i tshad ma dang gzhal bya khas blangs nas dbu ma pa rang gis phyi rgol la bsgrub pa'i ngag bkod pa'i sgo nas gtan tshigs yang dag gis bden par med pa'i don sgrub par byed do // de lta na yang rgyud par mi 'gyur ba ni ma dpyad pa'i 'jig rten grags pa'i tshad ma'i sgo nas 'jog pa'i phyir ro zhes 'chad do //.*

110 *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 447:

> *lugs bzhi pa dgag pa ni / 'dis ni tha snyad du rang gi mtshan nyid yod kyang rang mtshan rigs pas dpyad bzod pa tha snyad du 'gog par snang ba mi legs ni sngar bshad pa zin la / dbu ma pas phyi rgol dngos por smra ba la gzhan don rjes dpag gis bsgrubs pa'i gnyis ka'i lugs la grub pa'i tshul gsum pa'i rtags slob dpon zla ba grags pas lugs su 'dod pa ni rigs pa ma yin te / de 'dra ba de la tshig gsal nas dmigs kyis phye ba'i dgag pa mdzad pa'i phyir dang / de 'dra 'dod na de la dngos po stobs zhugs kyi rtags kyi tha snyad mi sbyor du chug kyang rang rgyud kyi rtags yin pa bzlog tu med pa'i phyir ro // 'di dag ni da dung yang 'chad par 'gyur bas 'dir de tsam las mi spro'o //.*

111 See Chapter 2.1.3.

112 Cf., e.g., *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 398a:

> *dbang shes rnams la gzugs sgra sogs yul lnga po de rnams rang gi mtshan nyid kyis ma grub bzhin du rang gi mtshan nyid du snang bas na de dag rang gi mtshan nyid la tshad ma ma yin no /.*

113 See Chapter 2.1.4.

114 The best candidate is perhaps *The Appearance of Reality* 774–75, where Mabja comes close to granting that particular characteristics appear before analysis. Yet Mabja is here working with the framework supplied by a Svātantrika opponent in order to show (by a so-called "equivalence of reasons," Tib. *rgyu mtshan mthsung pa*) that, even by the opponent's own lights, particular characteristics ought not to be admitted even in terms of the relative truth.

115 For his discussion of these issues, see, e.g., *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 447b–62b. For Tsongkhapa, the construal of relative *svalakṣaṇas* is antithetical to the Madhyamaka and yet on the other hand also part and parcel of any realist position. This fundamental difference in the outlook of genuine (i.e. Prāsaṅgika) Mādhyamikas and their opponents must be clearly acknowledged, and as a result of that the notion of a subject (Skt. *dharmin*, Tib. *chos can*) that appears to both Mādhyamikas and realists in common will have to be given up. While particular characteristics are inextricably part of that which the realist refers to as the subject under debate, such characteristics have no relation whatsoever to the subject as the Mādhyamika understands it. In the ensuing absence of a subject that appears to both parties in common, there cannot be any application of autonomous arguments either, for such arguments require precisely that type of subject (see *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 447b–57a). For Tsongkhapa this does, however, certainly not mean that the conventional experience of subjects that may be taken as the basis for debate is not shared by both Mādhyamikas and realists. Indeed it is. Once the fundamental differences between the two parties in terms of their respective denial and acceptance of particular characteristics has been acknowledged, and once the epistemological implications of these differences have been taken into account, Mādhyamikas may therefore very well debate by means of arguments that are "triply characterized" (Skt. *trairūpya*, Tib. *tshul gsum*). Since the *pramāṇas* acknowledged by the Mādhyamikas and the realists are fundamentally incompatible, all of the arguments thus advanced by the former party will, in conformity with Candrakīrti's teaching, still just be mere consequences (Skt. *prasaṅga*, Tib. *thal 'gyur*) and as such acknowledged by the opposition only (Skt. *paraprasiddha*, Tib. *gzhan la grags pa*) (see *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 457a–62b).

116 See pp. 67–68.

117 See *Ornament of Reason* 42–43:

> In terms of mere convention, both parties of the debate realize the negated or affirmed issues through four reliable means of cognition [i.e. perception, inference, scripture, and analogy] that are acknowledged by the world.

> *'jig rten la 'grags pa'i tshad ma bzhis tha snyad tsam du phyogs gnyis dgag sgrub kyi don rtogs par rnam par 'jog pa yin no //.*

118 Cf. *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 458b:

> *phyi rgol 'dis chos can mig dang rtags rang la mi lta ba dang dpe bum pa dang bsgrub bya'i chos ngon po sogs la mi blta ba yod par 'dzin pa'i yul rnams ni rang gi lugs kyis kyang tha snyad du yod par 'dod pas de dag la rigs pas gnod pa ma yin no //.*

119 Ibid. 437b–38a: *rang bzhin yod pa bkag nyid rang bzhin med pa bsgrubs pa yin*.
120 See p. 23.
121 See p. 59.
122 *The Clear Intent* 255a–b (cf. Tauscher 1995, 337):

> *gang gi tshe chos can la ltos te ji snyed pa mkhyen par song ba de'i tshe / yul yul can sor sor snang ba'i gnyis snang yod kyang / gnyis snang 'khrul ba'i bag chags drung phyung bas snang yul la ma 'khrul ba'i gnyis snang yin gyi 'khrul ba'i gnyis snang min te /.*

123 See *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 405b–06a:

> *tha snyad pa'i shes pa la grags pa dang ji ltar grags pa'i don de la tha snyad pa'i tshad ma gzhan gyis gnod pa med pa dang / de kho nyid la'am rang bzhin yod med tshul bzhin du dpyod pa'i rigs pas gnod pa mi 'bab pa zhig ni tha snyad du yod par 'dod la de dag las ldog pa ni med par 'dod do /.*

Cf. Tauscher 1995, 7–8.
124 *Compendium on the Clear Words* 483 (Cf. Tauscher 1995, 58 n. 127):

> *tshad ma de'i grub cha la tshad ma gzhan gyis gnod pa 'jug na de tshad ma ma yin par 'dod pa tsam la dngos smra ba rnams dang dbu ma thal rang thams cad mthun te /.*

125 On Gorampa and his Madhyamaka interpretation, see Cabezón and Dargyay 2007 (introductory discussion and annotated bilingual edition of *Distinguishing the Views*), Della Santini 1986 (presentation of central themes from the *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way*), and Thakchoe 2007 (study of Gorampa's critique of Tsongkhapa).
126 *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 154a:

> *zhes sogs kyi dbu ma'i gzhung lugs rnams las yod med gang rung gcig dgag byar byed pa'i tshe na / cig shos yang dgag byar byed dgos par gsungs pas mthar yod med sogs spros pa'i mtha' gang du'ang gzung du med par grub pa'o //.*

127 Cf. ibid. 167b–68a:

> *'di'i don dngos smra ba'i gzhung las 'dir bshad pa'i stong pa nyid kyi don med pa ltar rang rgyud pa'i gzhung la'ang med ces pa'i don du 'chad pa'ang nor te /.*

128 Ibid. 154b–55a:

> *'di la'ang sngar rgol dpyad pa ma zhugs pa'i gong du chos can khas len cing / phyir rgol dpyad pa zhugs nas bsgrub bya rtogs pa'i rjes dpag ma skyes kyi bar du chos can khas len pa tha snyad bden pa thabs su gyur pa'i don yin pa sngar bshad zin la / 'chad par 'gyur ba'i gtan tshigs thams cad la de bzhin du sbyar bar bya'o // rang rgyud pa ni sngar rgol dpyad pa zhugs pa dang / phyi rgol la rjes dpag skyes pa'i tshe chos can khas len pa ni rang rgyud kyi khyad par ro //.*

Cf. also *Distinguishing the Views* 33bff. and *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 135a–b:

> *rigs ngor chos can dang mthun dpe ma grub pas rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs med ces pa 'di la'ang thog mar dpyad gzhi 'dzin pa'i tha snyad pa'i tshad ma dang / bar du de la dpyod par byed pa'i tshe snga rgol gyi tshad ma dang / tha mar dpyad pa rdzogs nas phyir rgol gyi rgyud la tshad ma skyes pa'i skabs dang gsum las / dang po'i tshe snga rgol gyis kyang chos can khas len te / tha snyad la ni ma brten par // dam pa'i don ni bstan mi nus // zhes gsungs pa'i don no // gnyis pa'i tshe sngar rgol dbu ma'i lta ba la zhugs zin pas de dag khas mi len yang phyir rgol gyis khas len te / rgyu mtshan snga ma ltar ro // gsum pa'i tshe phyir rgol gyi ngor yang de dag khas mi len te / sngar rgol dang khyad par med pa'i phyir ro // lugs 'di la 'di shin tu gnad du che'o //.*

129 Cf. *Distinguishing the Views* 35 and *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 153b–54a.

130 *Distinguishing the Views* 29a–b:

> *rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i don / rigs pas dpyad bzod la byed dam / rang mtshan dang spyi mtshan gyi ya gyal du gyur pa'i rang mtshan la byed dam / thun mong min pa'i 'jog byed la byed / dang po ltar na / rang rgyud pas bden grub khas len par 'gyur zhing / de yang 'dod na dbu ma pa ma yin par 'gyur ro // de yang 'dod na / drang nges rnam 'byed kyi shog bu zhe brgyad pa'i nang logs su / mkhas pa de dag kyang chos bden par yod pa'i grub mtha' rigs pa'i sgo du ma nas 'gog cing bden med du legs par zhal gyis bzhes pas dbu ma pa ni yin no // zhes bris pa de dran par gyis shig / gnyis pa ltar na / phung po lnga po mngon pa las rang spyi'i mtshan nyid yod mnyam du bshad pa ltar 'dod par bya dgos pas / zhes pa dang 'gal lo // gsum pa ltar na dpal ldan zla bas / gzugs nas rnam mkhyen gyi bar gyi chos thams cad kyi 'jog byed gsungs pa dang 'gal lo //.*

131 Ibid. 28b:

> *dbu ma pa gzhan gyis yod na rang gi mtshan nyid kyis yod dgos la / rang gi mtshan nyid kyis med na med dgos par 'dod ces pa ni / 'phags yul gyi mkhas grub chen po rnams la 'di tsam gyis skur pa btab pa la dgos pa ci zhig 'grub ste /.*

132 Since for Tsongkhapa an argument accepted by others is applied based on a conventional appearance that remains conventionally undeniable (Tib. *rigs pas mi gnod pa*) from the point of view of the Mādhyamika, such an argument does not, based on Gorampa's understanding, qualify as a *prasaṅga* that is accepted by the other party only.

133 *Distinguishing the Views* 45b–46a:

> *gnas lugs dpyod tshe dpyad bya'i chos can ni // snang dang mi snang 'dod pa'i bye brag gis // thal rang gnyis kyi khyad par byung ba la // de don cung zad tsam yang ma rtogs par // gzhan grags rtags la rang rgyud gtan tshigs byas // rang rgyud rtags kyis rang mtshan sgrub par smra // blun po ma bslabs pa rnams bden mod kyi // mkhas pa sbyangs par rlom pa'ang 'di rjes 'jug / kye ma kyi hud snyigs dus sems can rnams // rgya bod mkhas grub rnams kyis mgrin gcig tu // bkral ba'i lam bzang gser rgyan dor nas ni // rang bzo'i mgal dum rgyan du byed pa mtshar/*

134 Cf. ibid. 29b–30a:

> *rang rgyud pas rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa bsgrub pa'i ched du rang rgyud khas blangs pa yin ces pa ni / dbu ma tshig gsal las / rang rgyud yod med kyi dgag sgrub mang du gsungs pa rnams kyi don cung zad kyang ma rtogs pa'am / yang na rtogs bzhin du phyin ci log tu gsungs par snang ste /.*

135 See, for example, ibid. 8a, where Gorampa enumerates Mabja among those early Mādhyamikas who upheld the genuine Madhyamaka free from extremes (Tib. *mtha' bral dbu ma chen po*).

136 *Light Rays of the Authentic View* 14b:

> *gsum pa ni de ltar dam bca' bzhi ston na rtsod bzlog las dbu ma pa la dam bca' med par gsungs pa dang 'gal lo snyam na / 'di'i lan la / pa los / dam bca' med par gsungs pa ni yongs gcod sgrub pa'i dam bca' med pa yin gyi / rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam yang med pa ma yin pas / mi 'gal lo ces dang / byang yes rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' yang pha rol gyi log rtog dgag par 'dod nas de'i ngor byas pa yin gyi dbu ma pa rang la dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam yang med do zhes pa dang / byang brtson gyis / don dam par dgag sgrub kyi dam bca' gang yang med la / kun rdzob tsam du 'dir skabs su bab pa rnam bcad dgag pa'i dam bca' tsam dang / spyir yongs gcod sgrub pa'i dam bca' yang yod pa mi 'gal lo zhes pa'i smra ba gsum snang ba las /.*

137 See above, n. 136.
138 The cited passage occurs in *Ornament of Reason* 49.
139 See *Light Rays of the Authentic View* 15a–b:

> *lugs gsum pa yang dam bca'i rang ldog nas don dam par med cing kun rdzob tu yod pa'i don du snang bas phyogs snga ma'i dogs pa mi khegs te / mtha' bzhi'i skye ba dgag pa'i dam bca' kun rdzob tsam du khas blangs pa gzhir bzhag nas dogs pa bkod pa yin gyi kun rdzob dang don dam ma phyed nas bkod pa ma yin pas da dung kun rdzob tsam du dam bca' yod med gnyis gsungs pa'i dogs pa spong dgos pa'i phyir /.*

140 See p. 64.
141 See *Light Rays of the Authentic View* 15b:

> *gnad kyi don ni spyir dbu ma pa la tha snyad bden pa rnam par gzhag pa'i tshe dgag sgrub kyi dam bca' gnyis ka yod cing / de dag rang rgyud du yang khas len te / chos can mthun snang du grub pa'i steng du dgag sgrub kyi chos khas blangs pa'i phyir ro // don dam pa skye med gtan la dbab pa'i tshe rang rgyud kyi dam bca' gtan med de / chos can mthun snang du grub pa med pas de la dgag sgrub kyi chos gang yang khas mi len pa'i phyir te /.*

142 *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 104a:

> *rma byas rnam par dpyad pa'i tshe dbu ma'i lta ba khas mi len pa yin gyi tha snyad du dbu ma'i lta ba dang / dgag sgrub dang / dam bca' dang / gtan tshigs thams cad khas len zhes pa 'thad kyang.*

143 Ibid. 104a:

> *gzhan la grags kyi rjes dpag gi skabs su tshul gsum 'jig rten na grags pa'i tshad mas grub ces pa 'di ni shin tu 'khrul te /.*

144 See p. 43 n. 56.
145 We may note that Tsongkhapa perceived a similar problem in the position enumerated as the fourth opponent in the *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path*. See p. 70.
146 *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 104a:

> *'jig rten na grags pa'i tshad ma ni tshig gsal las gsungs pa'i mngon gsum la sogs pa'i tshad ma bzhi yin par rang nyid kyis kyang khas blangs shing gzhung gi don yang yin pas de'i tshe chos can 'jig rten na grags pa'i tshad mas grub par thal ba'i phyir ro //.*

147 Ibid:

> *de'ang 'dod na / tshig gsal las / nang gi 'du byed bdag las skye ba med par bsgrub pa la rang rgyud mi rigs pa'i shes byed du rtsod zlog las / gal te mngon sum la sogs pa'i // don gyis 'ga' zhig dmigs na ni // bsgrub pa'am bzlog par bya na de // med phyir nga la klan ka med/ /ces gsungs pa drangs pa dang 'gal lo //.*

148 See, e.g., *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path* 457a–62b. While Tsongkhapa denies that the subject and "three characteristics of authentic arguments" (Tib. *gtan tshig yang dag gi tshul gsum*) are accessible to the debating parties within the *same* epistemological framework, he stresses that these factors nevertheless remain established by mundane reliable means of cognition throughout the debate between Mādhyamikas and realists.

149 *Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 105a:

> *dngos po stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma'i don // rnam 'grel las / dngos gang ji lta bur gyur pa // de 'dra de ni rtags sems kyi // rgyu yin de las de ltar gyi // dngos las de bskyed rtags can blo // zhes gsungs pa ltar sgrub rtags gnyis la brten pa'i rjes dpag rtags 'dzin sems las skye / de gtan tshigs las skye / gtan tshigs 'bras rtags kyi skabs su chos las skye / rang bzhin rtags kyi skabs su chos dang rdzas gcig yin de'ang chos de la rtags de bskyed pa'i nus pa don dam par yod pa'i chos de dang rtags de don dam par gcig yin pa la rag las pa la 'jog dgos par bsams nas dngos po stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma dbu ma pas khas mi len par rma bya chen pos bshad kyang*.

150 Ibid.:

> *sa paṇ gyis dngos smra ba rnams kyis de ltar 'dod kyang / dbu ma pas chos de la rtags de bskyed pa'i nus pa tha snyad du yod pa'am / chos de dang rtags de tha snyad du gcig yin pa tsam gyis chog pa la dgongs nas dngos po stobs zhugs kyi rigs pa bzhed par bshad pa ni shin tu legs so //*.

151 Thus, for example, the refutation of "arising from another" (Tib. *gzhan skye*) (*Universal Exposition of the Middle Way* 127bff.), which clearly echoes *Ornament of Reason*.

152 *Distinguishing the Views* 8a.

153 *Light Rays of the Authentic View* 3a:

> *des na blang bya ma nor ba'i lta ba ni / gang zhig ma rtogs na 'khor ba'i chos kyi gzhi byed / tshul bzhin rtogs na mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos kyi gzhi byed la / shes bya shes byed la sogs pa'i spros pa zhi zhing snang tsam rgyun mi 'chad pas med bzhin du snang ba sgyu ma dang mtshungs par dpyad na gzhi'am rtsa ba gang yang mi rnyed cing / byed las srid pa 'jig par byed pa la gdul bya'i ngor stong pa nyid kyi tha snyad du bzhag pa de nyid yin te /*.

154 Thus, for example, Mabja's discussion (*Ornament of Reason* 29–31) of "the purpose of the teaching of dependent origination" (Tib. *[rten brel] de bstan pa'i dgos pa*) is in the *Light Rays of the Authentic View* (12a–b) reformulated at crucial junctions, while still providing the general framework and wording.

155 On Mikyö Dorje's Madhyamaka interpretation, see Williams 1983, Broido 1985, Ruegg 1988, and Brunnholzl 2004. Wangchuk Dorje 2009 contains an English translation of the ninth Karmapa's commentary to Candrakīrti's *Entering the Middle Way*. This commentary is essentially a digest of Mikyö Dorje's commentary and consists for the most part of citations from the latter.

156 See n. 155.

157 Mikyö Dorje recognizes three distinct Prāsaṅgika transmissions in the Kagyü (Tib. *bka' brgyud*) lineage (see Williams 1983 and Ruegg 1988). These were, according to Mikyö Dorje, respectively introduced into Tibet through Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (Tib. *Mar pa Chos kyi blo 'gros* c.1012–c.98), Atīśa Dīpaṅkāra Srījñāna (980–1054), and Patsab Nyima Drakpa. The expression "Jowo Kagyü" (Tib. *jo bo bka' brgyud*) can be seen as a reference to the Kagyü masters in general, "the Kagyü lords," or it may be seen as alluding particularly to Atīśa, who is widely referred to as Jowo Jay (Tib. *Jo bo rje*), and the latter's disciples as enumerated within the Kagyü lineage.

158 As it is cited elsewhere in the *Chariot of Accomplished Ones* we may assume that the Madhyamaka treatise that Mikyö Dorje here calls attention to is *The Appearance of*

Reality (with its auto-commentary).

159 243:

> *jo bo bka' brgyud sogs thal 'gyur ba snga rabs pa spyi dang khyad par pa tshab bu bzhi ji ltar 'chad pa dang / de dag las bdag nyid chen po rma bya ba byang chub brtson 'grus kyi bzhed pa'i dbu ma'i brjed byang chen mo las ji ltar 'byung ba ltar snga rabs pa'i skye bu dam pa de dag gis dgongs pa bskang ba'i ched du 'di skad smros te*.

160 As treated under the heading *mTha' bzhi'i skye ba dgag pa las thal rang gnyis su gyes tshul*. (*Chariot of Accomplished Ones* 134–80).

161 Ibid. 134–35:

> *kha cig rang rgyud pas tshur mthong gi mngon rje tshad ma tshad ma yang dag tu khas len dang de'ang dngos po stobs zhugs kyi tshad mar khas len pa dang / de gzhir byas gzhan gyi khas blangs tsam min par rang rgyud kyi nyams myong gis grub cing / khas len pa'i tshad ma la brten nas stong pa nyid sgrub par byed cing / de'i log phyogs dgag par byed do //*.

162 *Rang bden pa*, litterally "self-true" or "auto-real." While I am unaware of such a term elsewhere, it figures centrally in Mikyö Dorje's discussion here.

163 *Chariot of Accomplished Ones*:

> *dngos po stobs zhugs zhes bya ba ni / dngos po don byed pa'i cha de gzhan gang la'ang ma bltos par dngos po rang bden pa de'i chos nyid kyi stobs kyis don byed la / de lta'i don byed pa de'ang rang bden pa yin cing de lta bu'i tshad ma rang bden pa ni dngos po stob zhugs kyi tshad ma zhes smra bar byed de /*.

164 See Sections 2.1.3 and 2.1.6.

165 See p. 62.

166 *Chariot of Accomplished Ones* 138:

> *de ltar zhugs pa'i tshad ma dbu ma rang rgyud pas khas len pa zhig srid na dbu ma rang rgyud pa dngos po la sogs pa'i chos thams cad rang gi ngo bos stong zhing / rang bden du ma grub par sgrub pa'i 'chad rtsod rtsom pa'i ched du thos bsam sgom pa'i tshogs gsog gi ngal ba de thams cad kyang snying po med par cis mi 'gyur / legs par soms shig /*.

167 Ibid. 139:

> *khyad par bden pa gnyis kar dngos po stobs zhugs kyi don grub par mi bzhed kyang / dgag sgrub mdzad pa na 'jig rten dang bstan bcos na dngos po thams chad dngos stobs kyi don byed par zhugs par grags pa bzhin / gzhan gyis khas blangs pa'i rjes su brjod nas gzhan la dngos po stobs zhugs kyi sgo nas dgag pa rgya cher mdzad de /*.

168 Ibid. 154:

> *rang lugs la bsgrub bya sgrub byed kyi rnam gzhag med kyang gzhan gyis btags pa sel ba'i ched kyi dgag sgrub 'jig rten dang rjes mthun du brjod pa ni thal 'gyur'i lugs yin la / don dam bden las brtsam pa'i rang lugs la bsgrub bya sgrub byed med kyang kun rdzob las brtsam nas de nyid 'tshol byed kyi bgrub bya sgrub byed kyi rnam gzhag 'thad ldan gyis gzhan gyi btags pa sel ba'i dgag sgrub khyad par can brjod pa ni rang rgyud pa'i lugs so zhes srog gnad du gdams so //*.

169 Ibid. 153:

> *de ltar na'ang sgrub byed dag tha snyad du brjod par byed kyang tha snyad tsam du grub pa dang ma grub par 'dod pa ni thal rang gi khyad par yin la /*.

170 See Chapter 2.1.5.

171 *Chariot of Accomplished Ones* 180:

> *'o na khyed cag tshad grub kyi rang lugs 'jog rgyu ma byung bas gzhan sun 'byin pa'i thal 'gyur mi 'byung bar thal / de brjod 'dod kyi rtog pa med pa'i phyir / de brjod 'dod kyi rtog pa yod na thal 'gyur de'i bzlog phyogs kyi dam bca' yang brjod 'dod kyi blo skye bar mtshung la / de skye na thal 'gyur de'i bzlog phyogs zhig sgra rtog gi dam mi bca' ka med du 'gyur ro zhe na //.*

172 Ibid. 180:

> *gzhan gyi log rtog gsal ba'i ched du rjod 'dod yod kyang / rang gi log par rtog pa'i dam bca' ba med na ci lto ba'i phyir / dper na thal 'gyur bas gtan tshigs dang dpe brjod pa lta bu'am / yang na rnam gsal gyi dpe mig dang ldan pas mig thur gyis ling thog gis bkab pa'i gzhan gyi mig 'byed 'dod yod cing / 'byed kyang mig ldan rang nyid kyi mig 'byed 'dod yod mi dgos pa bzhin no /.*

Cf. also ibid. 156:

> *bden par gnyis kar rang lugs kyi tshad mas gub pa'i sgrub byed dang / bsgrub ba'i dngos chos dang bcas pa khas mi len pa gang zhig / de mi len bzhin gyi log rtog sun 'byin byed du ngag ji ltar yang bkod du rung ba'i phyir / rtags chos la sogs kyi 'brel ba'i zhen don kyang gzhan kho na'i phyogs la gnas pa'i phyir / rang phyogs la ni dgag sgrub kyi 'gal 'brel thams cad nam mkha'i smig rgyu grol ba ltar zhig pa'i phyir /.*

173 Ibid. 180:

> *de ltar snyam pa de lug ltar lkugs pa zhig ste / de ltar na med dgag de ka ma yin dgag tu 'gyur ba dang / char ma bab pa de ka char bab par 'gyur ba la sogs su blun po de dag re bar cis mi 'gyur/.*

174 Ibid. 160:

> *yang slob dpon chen po rma bya'i yig char / kha cig dngos stobs zhugs pa yis / phyogs gnyis dgag sgrub nges pa yin ces / zhes dang / yul dngos stobs kyis zhugs pa yi / tshad mas de nyid rtogs so zhes / chos kyi grags pa'i rjes 'brangs pa'i / rtog ge pa rnams smra bar byed // ces sogs*.

175 Ibid. 160:

> *ces pa la sogs pa 'byung ba la dpags nas phyi rabs pa kha cig / mdo sems kyi 'dod pa'i tshad ma la sogs pa'i dngos po rang bden pa don dam par grub par smra ba de dbu ma rang rgyud pas kyang de ltar khas blangs nas dgag sgrub byas so zhes snga rabs pa'i dgongs par 'chad pa ni nor ba yin te / mdo sems thun mong du shes pa dang / de'i rnam pa ma 'khrul pa'i dngos po thams cad sems tsam gyi ngo bos don dam bden pa rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub par khas len la / rang rgyud pas ni phyi nang gi dngos po'i rnam par snang ba'i chos 'di dag rang gi mtshan nyid kyis bden par grub pa'i dngos po stobs zhugs su 'ga yang ma gsung pa'i phyir te / chos 'di dag kun rdzob rdzun chos kho nar bzhags pa'i phyir /.*

176 Tib. *Rigs rgyan snang ba*. Thus Mikyö Dorje refers to *the Appearance of Reality* (*dBu ma rigs tshogs drug kyi rgyan de kho na nyid snang ba*); see pp. 13–14 n. 15.

177 *'o na snga rabs pas de skad gsungs pa ni rang rgyud pas chos 'di dag kun rdzob tu kun rdzob kyi tshad mas grub pa'i sgo nas phyogs gnyis kyi dgag sgrub byed pa 'thad ldan du smra ba de 'gog pa'i ched du phyogs sngar bzhag pa yin la / yang tshad ma dang gzhal bya rang bden pa yod do zhes mdo sems dag smra ba la brten nas tshad ma'i mdo dang rnam 'grel las 'byung ba de bdag nyid chen po byang chub brtson 'grus kyis rgya cher rigs rgyan snang ba la sogs par dgag par mdzad pa yang legs par 'thad de / tshad ma dang gzhal bya rang bden pa 'gog pa'i slad*

du slob dpon bdag nyid chen po klus kyang zhib mo rnam par 'thag par rtog ge tshig don bcu drug rgyas par bkag pa'i phyir /.

178 See ibid. 150:

de ltar na'ang rang rgyud pas kun rdzob pa'i dngos po stobs zhugs kyis don byed nus kyi chos dang / de gang gis grub pa'i tshad ma don dam par med kyang kun rdzob kyi bden par rnam par bzhag pa na kun rdzob sgyu ma lta bu'i dngos po stobs zhugs kyis don byed nus kyi chos dang / de gang gis grub pa'i tshad ma der yod par 'jog pa yin te / kun rdzob kyi dngos po gang dang gang 'jog pa de thams cad don byed nus sam / mtshan nyid 'dzin pa'i cha nas der 'jog la / de'i don byed dang mtshan nyid 'dzin byed kyi chos gang yin pa'ang rang 'jog byed kyi dngos po de'i stobs kyis don byed pa dang tshan nyid 'dzin pa byed pa'i rgyu rkyen la bltos pa'i phyir /.

179 For Mikyö Dorje, Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika equal *rab tu mi gnas pa smra ba* and *sgyu ma rigs sgrub pa*. See ibid. 151–52.

180 Ibid. 152:

kun rdzob tu'ang kun rdzob pa'i dngos stobs kyis zhugs shing tshad mas grub na der mi bslu bar yod dgos la / der mi bslu zhing bden par yod na kun rdzob thams cad 'dus byas brdzun pa ma yin par 'gyur ba'i phyir sgyu ma lta bu'i dngos po stobs zhugs kyi chos dang de tshad grub tu khas blangs pa'ang rang tshig gnod bcas yin te sgyu ma'i rta sgyu ma ma yin cing / dngos po rang rgyud pa'i rta nyid du 'gyur ba'i phyir / des na chos thams cad sgyu ma ltar bden par tshad mas zhen par byed pa de la'ang spros mtshan 'dzin pa'i lhag cung zad lus par gsal te /.

181 See p. 81.

182 Ibid. 153:

'o na rang rgyud pa'i chos tshul la brten nas de kho nyid kyi don mi rtogs par 'gyur ram zhe na / mi 'gyur te / myug sogs chos can la bsgrub bya stong pa nyid kyi don gcig dang du bral sogs kyi sgo nas rtogs par byed pa'i phyir /.

183 Ibid. 153:

sgrub bya sgrub byed tha snyad du grub 'dzin gyi blo de rang rgyud pa'i lugs der yang phyi nas dbu ma'i lta ba goms pa'i tshogs sog gyi mthus ngang gis bzlogs par 'gyur ro //.

184 Ibid. 134:

bod gangs can gyi thal 'gyur ba snga rabs pa dag gi dgongs don phyis byon pa snga rabs pa'i rje 'brangs su rlom pa dag gis 'chad pa de dgongs don dpyis ma phyin pa'i tshul /.

185 Ibid. 676:

sangs rgyas la ye shes yod med kyi rnam par dpyad pa 'di ni gangs can gyi khrod 'dir sngon khu lo tsā ba'i dbu ma thal 'gyur gyi yig tshang bla na med pa nas byung ba de nyid 'thad par mthong nas de ltar brjod pa'o //.

186 Ibid. 653–76.

187 Ibid. 664–65:

'dir 'di shes par bya ste / yul kun rdzob brdzun pa 'dzin pa'i shes pa thams cad bslu bas yul can kun rdzob shes pa'i blo de thams cad 'khrul pa nyid kyi sangs rgyas kyi sar kun rdzob gzigs pa'i mkhyen pa ni dpyad na 'gar yang mi 'grub bo zhes theg pa cen po'i bka' mtha' dag tu zhugs kyang / theg pa chen po'i dgongs 'grel mkhan gzhan dag / de ltar sgra ji bzhin du smras na tha snyad du thams cad mkyhen pa med do zhes ya nga ba la 'dzems nas sgra ji bzhin du smra ma nus pa

las / slob dpon zla ba grags pas 'jigs pa med pa'i dbyangs kyis sangs rgyas la kun rdzob 'khrul pa'i chos yul du byed pa'i ye shes dang blo med de / sgrib gnyis bag chags dang bcas pa gtan spangs zin pa'i phyir / de ltar na thams cad mkhyen pa la thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyang med do zhes skur 'debs su'ang mi 'gro ste / dpyad pa na sang rgyas la thams cad mkhyen pa dang mi mkhyen pa gnyis ka'ang spros pa yin pas sangs rgyas la thams cad mkhyen pa'i blo yod ces smras na des kyang skur 'debs su 'gro ste / thams cad mkhyen pa la spros chos yod par smras pa'i phyir ro zhes 'chad pa yin la /.

188 According to Shönnu Pal and others. See Chapter 1.1.
189 See Chapter 3.1.4.
190 See Chapter 3.2.2.
191 Longchenpa accepts and employs Mabja's (and Jayānanda's) idea of genuine Madhyamaka being distinguished by its rejection of cognition by the power of fact, but he does not make this the general theme of his discussion. Instead he relies on the principle of the indivisibility of the two truths (Tib. *bden pa dbyer med*) of appearance and emptiness, which in turn contradicts Mabja's treatment of appearance (Tib. *snang ba*) as a *negandum*. On the issue of the relevance of views from the perspective of the Mādhyamika, we have seen that Longchenpa takes explicit issue with Mabja, yet his portrayal of Mabja's position is crude and Longchenpa's own account has clearly more in common with the latter than what is apparent. Tsongkhapa develops his Prāsaṅgika interpretation within the framework provided by Mabja and yet takes explicit issue with what appears to be Mabja's position on cognition by the power of fact. Tsongkhapa's reliance on the law of the excluded middle in the refutation of the "four extremes" (Skt. *catuṣkoṭi*), his account of omniscience, as well as his notion of a conventional establishment that remains intact (Tib. *mi gnod pa*) in the face of ultimate investigation do moreover all run counter to Mabja's view. Gorampa's uncompromising rejection of existence and non-existence without any sense of implicit affirmation is much in tune with Mabja's. Yet he refuses to see, as Mabja does, mere appearance (Tib. *snang tsam*) as the product of ignorance and, while criticizing Mabja's assessment of cognition by the power of fact, he entirely rejects the idea (which he exclusively associates with Tsongkhapa) that Svātantrikas accept conventional particular characteristics. While nominally remaining a follower of Mabja throughout, Mikyö Dorje rejects central elements of the former's exegisis. In his carefully non-committal treatment of buddha-gnosis, his discussion is, however, strongly resonant with Mabja's explicit position.
192 See above, n. 191.
193 Cf. Nance's observation (2011: 1–2) of a "generalized need to appropriate authority via acts of speech," which meant that Indian Buddhist commentators "aimed to speak not only for themselves, but also for Buddhism more genrally – and thus to speak for Buddhas."
194 The fact that Chapa had become the object of intense criticism from the side of influential early Prāsaṅgikas could of course make explicit associations with him less desirable, yet if the concern were primarily to show conformity with great masters of the past, Tsongkhapa could very well have made a point of explaining Chapa's "true intent" (Tib. *dgongs pa bshad pa*).
195 For an analysis of Tsongkhapa's accounts of his own role as a Mādhyamika in relation to the masters of India and the "earlier generations" (Tib. *snga rabs pa*) of scholars in Tibet, see Tauscher 1995, 39–56. On the importance of visionary encounters with Mañjuśrī for his final insights and the formulation of his fully matured thought, see ibid. 46–56.
196 See p. 65.
197 *Expostion of Entering the Middle Way* 347a:

> *lugs 'di dge long bzla grags kyis // dbu ma'i bstan bcos las btus nas // lung ji bzhin dang man ngag ni // ji lta ba bzhin brjod pa yin // 'di las gzhan na chos 'di ni // ji ltar med pa de bzhin du // 'dir 'byung lugs kyang gzhan na ni // med ces mkhas rnams nges par mdzod // ji ltar dbu ma'i bstan bcos ma gtogs par bstan bcos gzhan las stong pa nyid ces bya ba'i chos 'di phyin ci ma log par mi brjod pa de bzhin du / kho bo cag gis 'dir lugs gang zhig brgal lan dang bcas par bsnyad pa'i lugs 'di nas 'byung ba de yang stong pa nyid kyi chos ltar bstan bcos gzhan na med do zhes mkhas pa rnams kyis nges par mdzad du gsol lo //.*

198 Cf., for example, Tauscher 1995, 50: "Dem entsprechend erheben die Kritiker gegen Tsoṅ kha pa auch den wahrscheinlich schwierigsten Vorwurf, der in Rahmen einer buddhistischen Exegese möglich ist: Bruch mit der Tradition und Neuerung."

199 For an incisive discussion of the development of sectarian divisions in Tibet, see Dreyfus 1997, 33–41.

200 See Chapter 3.2.4. Beginning with a discussion of the ways in which the masters of the past (specifically Mabja) have been misunderstood, the *Chariot of Accomplished Ones* proceeds to present the true intent of these masters, which is finally followed by a refutation of the spurious interpretation of the Prāsaṅgika/Svātantrika distinction according to later generations (i.e. Tsongkhapa *et al*.).

201 *Ascertainment of the Middle Way* vol. 2 544–47.

202 Ibid. 547–48:

> *o' na de ltar mang du bshad pa de dag gis ci zhig bya zhe na / 'ga zhig gis bsam pa la kho bos ji skad du rgyas par bshad pa de dag kyang / gangs can gyi ljongs su phyis byon pa 'ga' zhig gzu bor spyod pa'i blo gros dang / slob dpon snga ma'i man ngag dang bral bzhin du rang nyid tshang pa chen por khas len pa'i 'du 'god kyis blo gros gzhon nu ma ngag yid ches su gzhug pa'i don du brjod bya'i don gyi bsgrigs dang / rjod byed tshig gi sdeb lugs mkhas pa 'gu ba skyed pa'i rnam 'gyur sna' tshogs pa dag dang bral yang / rjod byed grong ba'i tshig gi sdeb sbyor gyis brjod bya mi mkhas dag kho na dga' ba bskyed pa'i glegs bam gyi tshogs rtsom pa lhur len pa de dag dang mtshung pa kho na'o / snyam du sems shing dogs pa dag mang bar snang bas / de dag de ltar sems pa dang bral bar gyur cig snyam du bsams nas bris pa yin no //.*

203 While Gorampa, Śākya Chokden, and Mikyö Dorje were all clearly familiar with *The Appearance of Reality*, the recently surfaced edition seems to be the only available one today. *Ornament of Reason* appears on the other hand to have been quite widely studied and published into the present day.

204 Cf., e.g., Sthiramati's comments (226a) to stanza XII. 4 in the Maitreya-attributed *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras*, delineating the bodhisattva's increasing reliance on realization rather than scripture as the basis for teaching.

205 *Sūtra on Transcendent Insight in Eight Thousand Lines* 2a–b:

> *tshe dang ldan pa sha' ri'i bu bcom ldan 'das kyi nyan thos rnams ni gang ci smra ba dang ston pa dang / nye bar ston pa dang / rjod par byed pa dang / gsal bar byed pa dang / yang dag par gsal bar byed pa de dag thams cad ni de bzhin gshegs pa'i skye bu'i mthu yin par rig par bya'o // de ci'i phyir zhe na / de bzhin gshegs pas chos gang bstan pa'i chos bstan pa de la slob pa na de dag gis chos nyid de mngon sum du byas nas 'dzin to // de dag gis chos nyid de mngon sum du byas shing bzung nas gang dang gang 'chad pa dang gang dang gang ston pa dang gang dang gang nye bar ston pa dang gang dang gang rjod par byed pa dang gang dang gang gsal bar byed pa dang gang dang gang yang dag par gsal bar byed pa de dag thams cad chos nyid dang mi 'gal ba yin no // tshe dang ldan pa sha' ri'i bu rigs kyi bu de dag 'di ltar chos nyid de nye bar ston pa rnams chos nyid dang mi 'gal ba de yang de bzhin shegs pas chos bstan pa'i rgyu mthun pa'o //.*

206 I.e. the causal relationship between these two categories is not just in terms of scripture serving as the cause for realization (as implied in e.g. Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* VIII. 39). On the Dharma as scripture and realization, see Cabezón 1994, 39.

4 Translation: *The Appearance of Reality*

4.1 Combined translations of Mabja's *The Appearance of Reality* and the topical outline (Tib. *sa bcad*) contained in the auto-commentary[1]

Root verses of The Appearance of Reality: An Ornament to the Collections of Middle Way Reasoning

Homage to the noble, youthful Mañjuśrī.

The message of the Bliss-gone's teaching, the body of objects of cognition,
The single traversed path, the meaning of the Middle Way –
These are the magnificence of the two truths;
This Dharma is superior to anything else.
The discernment of the two truths (755)[2]
Will be undertaken under six headings:
Essence, divisions, characteristics, the probative reliable means of cognition,
The way to gain experience, and the fruition that is to be achieved [0–1][3].

1 The two truths in essence (755–57).

Just as the objects observed due to a visual disorder are not
Observed as objects by those who have no such disorder,
All entities are, from the cognitive viewpoints of delusion and its absence,
The two truths of dependent origination and thorough peace since the beginning[4] [2].

2 Divisions of the two truths (757–59).
21 Divisions of the relative (757–58).
211 The mundane relative truth (757).

The relative is of two kinds, for there is what is true from the perspectives
Of worldly children and of the noble ones involved with appearance.
As for the first, there is the correct (Skt. *tathya*) *and the mistaken* (Skt. *mithyā*),
Which are the objects cognized by flawed and healthy faculties[5] [3].

211.1 The authentic relative truth, which is what infantile worldly beings assume is real in terms of particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*) (757).
211.2 The appearance of the mistaken relative, which even that type of mind understands not to be real in terms of particular characteristics (757).
212 The relative truth of the noble ones (Skt. *ārya*) (757–58).
22 Divisions of the ultimate (758).

In the cognitive perspective of noble ones without delusion
All objects of cognition are seen to be of the same taste.
Hence, in the ultimate truth of the intrinsic nature (Skt. *dharmatā*)
The constructs (Skt. *prapañca*) *of division are thoroughly pacified* [4].

3 Characteristics (759–62).
31 Refutation of the approach of others (759).

Some say that "mere object of cognition" and "absence of constructs"
Are the characteristics of the relative and the ultimate truths.
Yet since the objects of cognition, expression, and evaluation are established by perception,
There could then not be any mistaken thoughts about ultimate entities;
The inference (Skt. *anumāna*) *that refutes truth would serve no purpose;*
And when it is said that entities are relative, and not ultimate,
There would be no disagreement with the approach of the realists[6] [5a–6c].

32 Presentation of our own approach (759).

The relative is the unexamined content of deluded consciousness
And the ultimate the content of the nobles' cognition, free from delusion[7] [6d–7a].

33 Ascertaining the nature of the characteristics (759–61).
331 The characteristics of the relative (759–61).
332 The characteristics of the ultimate (760–61).
4 The reliable means of cognition that establish the two truths (761–807).
41 Refutation of the approach of others (761–62).
42 Presentation of our own approach (762).

When demolished by the mind that has enquired there are no constructs,
And the mind that has not enquired sees dependent origination;
Hence, the ultimate is similar to space and the relative resembles illusion,
And, thoroughly beyond the two extremes, this then is ascertained as the meaning of the Middle Way[8] [7b–8a].

43 Ascertaining the nature of the reliable means of cognition (762–807).
431 Identifying the object of negation,[9] i.e. the extremes that others conceive of (762–63).

431.1 Refuting the mistaken idea that there is no object of negation, even conventionally (763).
431.2 Identifying the essence of the object of negation (763).
431.3 The divisions that pertain to the object of negation (763–67).
431.31 The mistaken cognition that is deluded with respect to the appearing object (Tib. *snang yul*),[10] i.e. that which appears while not being real as an entity (763).
431.32 The mistaken cognition that is mistaken with respect to the conceived object (Tib. *zhen yul*)[11] (763–65).
431.321 The denigrating extreme of belief in conventional non-existence (764–65).

> *Certain proponents of nihilism* (Skt. *ucchedavāda*)*, the source of all flaws,*
> *Do not accept the existence of realms that they do not see.*
> *Holding the mind to be of the same identity as the body, they deny that the former exists before or after the latter.*
> *Rejecting karma and the results of the path,*
> *They deny there being any causes that are associated with an unseen, past world.*
> *Some even deny the existence of causes that are seen* [8b–9c].

431.321.1 Denigration of the essence of objects (764).
431.321.2 Denigration of effects (764).
431.321.3 Denigration of causes (764–65).
431.322 The exaggerating extreme of belief in real existence (765–67).
431.322.1 The belief in permanent and singular entities, such as the self and the primary principle (Skt. *prakṛti*) (765–66).

> *There are some who assert permanent entities, such as the self or the primary principle* (Skt. *prakṛti*) [9d].

431.322.2 The belief in conditioned, impermanent, and multiple entities, such as the apprehended, the apprehender, or non-dual entities (766–67).

> *Others hold that there are apprehended particles* (Skt. *paramāṇu*) *and apprehending instants,*
> *Or moments of cognition without the duality of apprehended* (Skt. *grāhya*) *and apprehender* (Skt. *grāhaka*),
> *Thus asserting the substantial existence of mere phenomena* [10a–c].

431.322.3 The superimposition of a real emptiness, which is empty of the former entities (767).

> *"The emptiness of that is the object of reasoning,"*
> *Thus declare some, who hold emptiness to be a mark*[12] [10d–11a].

432 Identifying the reasoning that refutes such extremes (768–82).
432.1 Refutation of the approach of others (768–80).
432.11 Refutation of reliable means of cognition based on facts that are established to both [parties in the debate] (768–77).

> *Some hold that fact-based* (Skt. *vastubalapravṛtta*) *reliable means of cognition*
> *Definitively negate and establish with respect to the two positions*[13] [11b–c].

432.111 General refutation of reliable means of cognition (768–76).
432.111.1 Refutation of the meaning of the term "reliable means of cognition" (768–69).

> *In terms of previously not realized substances* (Skt. *dravya*) *and kinds* (Skt. *jāti*)*, there is overextension and impossibility,*[14]
> *And once the evaluated and the evaluator are examined*
> *In terms of identity and difference they do not exist.*[15]
> *Hence, "initial evaluation" cannot reasonably be the meaning of the term "reliable means of cognition"* [11d–12c].

432.111.2 Refutation of the defining characteristics of reliable means of cognition (769–77).
432.111.21 Account of the characteristics of reliable means of cognition that the logicians conceive of (769–71).

> *"Undeceiving in terms of the power to obtain the determined object" –*
> *Some hold this to be the defining characteristic of reliable means of cognition.*[16]
> *Others refer to undeluded modes of apprehending a previously not realized object,*
> *And so assert that objects are realized through the dispelling of superimposition* (Skt. *adhyāropa*).[17]
> *Still others hold that "illumining the object not realized" refers to ultimate reliable means of cognition,*
> *Whereas "undeceiving" is in terms of conventional reliable means of cognition*[18] [12d–14a].

432.111.22 Refutation (771–76).
432.111.221 Refuting that such means of cognition are undeceiving (771–73).

> *A non-entity cannot be an obtained object*
> *And since the substance of entities is momentary*
> *That which evaluates could not have the power to obtain the determined object.*
> *If it is argued that "obtaining the determined object" is in terms of the*

continuum of entities,
The sense of being undeceiving is lost and no mind at all
Could be a reliable means for cognizing the substance of entities.[19]
If the continuum were different from the substances it would be permanent,
It would be observed as different, and it would be independent of the substances.
If it were inseparable from the substances it would, like the substances,
Be multiple and so the determined object could not be obtained.
Likewise, a single conceptual distinction (Skt. *vyāvṛtti*) *can, when examined,*
Not reasonably be identical with or different from the substances,[20]
And hence also here "obtaining the determined object" turns out to be impossible.
"Undeceiving," therefore, is an amazing silliness [14b–17c].

432.111.222 Refuting that they realize a true object (773–76).

Likewise, "engagement with objects not realized" displays, when examined in terms of substances and kinds,
Respectively, a lack of extension and vast overextension.[21]
Once object and agent are tested for sameness and difference they do not exist,
Hence there could not be any dispelling of superimposition [18d].

432.111.222.1 Refuting that an actual entity can appear (773–75).

In terms of both appearance and conception
The situation is the same as with the objects of deluded, mistaken cognition.[22]
Hence, objects that appear, are conceived of, or both, are all not established as true.
Appealing to the power to perform (Skt. *arthakriyāsāmarthya*) *will serve no purpose*
As the situation will be just as before.
When something does not appear to the mind when awake, we understand that it,
Therefore, neither would exist as a particularly characterized entity during a dream.
Likewise, understand that when something does not exist from the perspective reasoning
It does not arise with particular characteristics (Skt. *svalakṣaṇa*) *in terms of the conventional reality either.*[23]
The past is over and the future has not occurred;
Moreover, since that which lies between them would have parts, there is no present [19a–21b].

432.111.222.2 Refuting that inference is a way of apprehending that is free from delusion (775–76) .

In the case of the identical, there cannot be something related to something else.
Likewise, in terms of causal relations,
A temporary relationship will permit of error
While intrinsic relationships cannot be determined and set apart[24] [21c–22b].

432.111.223 The master Prajñākaragupta's assertion of distinct characteristics for ultimate and relative reliable means of cognition does not make sense (776).

There are no ultimate reliable means of cognition,
The definition includes far too much,[25] *and in terms of just the conventional*
There is no being free from deception, just as it was explained before [22c–23a].

432.111.224 The master Devendrabuddhi's[26] assertion that both absence of deception and the realization of a true object characterize reliable means of cognition does not make sense either (776).
432.111.3 Refutation of ascertainment through reliable means of cognition (776).
432.112 Particular refutations (776–77).

Since the apprehended does not exist as entity
There could not be any perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*) *that is free from delusion.*[27]
Since there is no fundamental relation (Skt. *pratibandha*), *there could not be*
Any inference (Skt. *anumāna*) *that ensues from evidence free from delusion.*[28]
Without any relation, it does not either make sense that scripture (Skt. *āgama*),
As a reliable means of cognition delivers the understanding of meanings based on words.
Nothing resembles anything else totally, and everything resembles everything else somewhat;
Hence, when it comes to analogy (Skt. *upamāna*) *as a reliable means of cognition,*
What are the examples and similarities whereby one understands? [23b–25b].

432.12 Refutation of the assertion that in terms of convention there are no principles of *probandum* and proof for oneself (777–80).

Free from the extremes of existence and non-existence, permanence and annihilation,
The path of the Middle Way is dependent origination.
Why would one not accept this in terms of the merely relative?
If in terms of the mere relative there is no Middle Way
How can we speak of persons who adhere to the Middle Way?
If you accept that there are Middle Way persons
Who have no position themselves, yet refute those of others,
Then, since self and other are mutually dependent,
If there is no position of one's own there is no position of others either.
What, then, is it that you wear yourself out refuting?
Probative arguments of the Middle Way apply to the meaning of the two truths;
And the meaning of their words one intends to show where they have neither been established nor excluded.
How, then, could there not be any merely relative probanda*?*
If even in terms of the relative there were no reliable means of cognition
One would not understand that the opposing position is false
And based on what would then the wish to refute that position arise?
Without knowing whether the triple characteristic (Skt. *trairūpya*) *has been claimed,*
Against what would you be arranging the consequential (Skt. *prasaṅga*) *argument?*
Without anything that could make you aware whether earlier and later statements are in conflict,
Please explain how, indeed, a consequential argument could be established?[29] [25c–30b].

432.13 Answer to the objection that the above two refutations contradict each other (780).

Reliable means of cognition by the force of fact do not even exist in terms of the relative,
And hence there are indeed no autonomous arguments.[30]
Based on the reliable means of cognition that are accepted in the world
Affirmations and negations become certain, and the arguments are held to be consequential[31] [30c–31b].

432.2 Presentation of our own approach (780–82).

Perception (Skt. *pratyakṣa*)*, as a reliable means of cognition, evaluates experientially an object that was not realized;*
Inference (Skt. *anumāna*)*, as a reliable means of cognition, evaluates its object*
Through arguments that display the triple characteristic (Skt. *trairūpya*)*;*

With scripture (Skt. *āgama*) *the object is evaluated by means of trustworthy words;*
And in analogy (Skt. *upamāna*) *an example is used for evaluating an object that resembles it –*
Such four reliable means of cognition that are accepted in the world are taught.[32]
With an argument in which the triple characteristic is ultimately accepted by the opponent
A meaning to be established becomes unequivocally certain from the opponent's perspective;
Alternatively, the opposite [of the opponent's assertion] may be established; [the argument may appeal to] equivalence;
Or an element in the dispute may be lacking establishment in the topic under investigation –
These are the four great consequences[33] [31c–34a].

433 Employing reasoning to refute the object of negation (782–807).
433.1 Refutation of the extreme of conventional non-existence (782–85 and 813–14).
433.11 Refutation of denigration (Skt. *apavāda*) concerning the essence (782–83).

No color or shape of the mind can be observed
And the body is not observed as an essence that apprehends.
Hence, since they possess incompatible qualities, they cannot be of the same substance,
And so the non-existence of the mind before and after the body cannot be established.
That mere awareness arises based on previous awareness
And that that, in turn, produces subsequent awareness is experienced through self-awareness;
This, therefore, invalidates the notion of a beginning and an end of awareness.
Otherwise, how could we possibly refute that there may be smoke in the absence of fire,
Or that there are candles that have no light?[34]
Since the reverse of the perception of oneself and all others
Is not established [but still] uncertain
The classes of beings that have not been seen cannot be negated [34b–37a].

433.12 Refutation of denigration concerning the effect (783–84 and 813–14).
433.121 Refuting the denial of effects of action (Skt. *karman*) (783–84).

The maturation of action (Skt. *karman*) *is not witnessed in this life,*
Yet that is not a reason for denying it in other lives.

Moreover, the idea that there is no continuity of awareness elsewhere has already been refuted,
And while false, the effects of action are certain, just as in the case of an illusion.
Because it is established by scripture, because a reliable means for cognizing it is possible,
And because there may be doubt about it, the [effects of action can]not be denied [37b–38c].

433.122 Refuting the denial of effects of the path (813–14).
433.13 Refutation of denigration concerning the cause (784–85).

If things were uncaused they would not depend on anything,
And they would then not have any spatial or temporal restrictions.
Like the sky flower, such things would not appear,
And efforts for the sake of a result would serve no purpose [38d–39c].

433.2 Refutation of the extreme of real existence (785–806).
433.21 Refutation of proofs of real existence (785–86).
433.22 Explaining how the position is flawed (786–806).
433.221 Refutation of permanent entities (786–87).
433.221.1 Refutation of permanence on the basis of entities (786).

Since things are destroyed when their continuity comes to an end,
They cannot not *be destroyed from moment to moment.*
Since their situations change, their nature is not permanent,
And, since gradual results can be reached, how could they be unchanging? [39d–40c].

433.221.2 Refutation of entities on the basis of permanence (786–87).
433.221.3 Refutation of permanent entities as such (787).

That which relates to many cannot reasonably be of a singular nature;
Hence there are no permanent entities [40d–41a].

433.222 Refutation of impermanent entities (787–804).
433.222.1 Arguments that refute ultimate objects of relation (787–800).
433.222.11 Refutation by means of examining the essence of entities (787–93).
433.222.111 Presentation of the argument from absence of one and many[35] (787).
433.222.112 Demonstration of its probative power (787–93).
433.222.112.1 The subject (787).
433.222.112.2 The *probandum* (787–90).
433.222.112.21 Refutation of the approaches of others (788).
433.222.112.22 Presentation of our own approach (788).
433.222.112.23 Rebuttal of criticism (788–90).

433.222.112.231 Answering an objection to the ultimate not being treated as a *probandum* in the form of an implicative negation (788–89).
433.222.112.232 Answering an objection to an implicative negation being treated as probandum in terms of the relative (789–90).
433.222.112.3 The proof (790–93).

Things relate to multiple aspects in space and time,
Hence there are no wholes; particles and instants on the other hand
Are placed in the center of spatial and temporal multiplicity,
And so their different sides cannot face in the same direction.[36]
Since its cause is absent, there is no multiplicity,
And when there is neither one nor many, how could any entity exist?[37]
The opposite [of entity] is useless and powerless[38] [41b–42d].

433.222.112.31 The property of the position (790–92).
433.222.112.311 Identification of the object of negation, singularity and plurality (790).
433.222.112.312 Refuting singularity and plurality with respect to that which appears to be one and many (790–92).
433.222.112.312.1 Refutation of true singularity (790–92).
433.222.112.312.11 Refutation of the singularity of coarse wholes (790–91).
433.222.112.312.12 Refuting that the subtle components of the coarse exist as singular (790–91).
433.222.112.312.121 [Refutation of partless particles] (791–92).
433.222.112.312.121.1 Refutation with respect to presence and absence of contact (791).
433.222.112.312.121.2 Refutation in terms of how one particle may face another (791–92).
433.222.112.312.121.3 Subsidiary refutation in terms of extension (792).
433.222.112.312.122 [Refutation of partless moments of cognition] (792).
433.222.112.312.2 Showing how this also invalidates plurality (792).
433.222.112.313 Reply to objections to this refutation (792).
433.222.112.32 The entailment (792).
433.222.113 The proven argument's relation to scripture (792–93).
433.222.12 Refutation through examining the cause of entities (793–98).
433.222.121 Presentation of the argument (793).
433.222.122 Proving its probative power (793–98).
433.222.122.1 The character of the proof (793).

Nothing arises from itself, nor from anything else.
Cause and effect cannot be different;
If they were, causes would be equal to non-causes.[39]
Neither a cause that has ceased, nor one that has not, can have any power or influence.
Since both of the flaws would ensue, and since each individually would be

powerless,
Things do not arise from both themselves and other things.[40]
They are not uncaused, because they are occasional,
Because they are seen as objects of the mind,[41]
And because efforts applied to the cause for the sake of the result serve a purpose.
There are no other ways of arising,[42]
Nor are there any entities that, like the sky flower, have not arisen [43a–45c].

433.222.122.2 Establishing the property of the position (793–98).
433.222.122.21 Refutation of arising from self (793–94).
433.222.122.211 Refutation in terms of reality (793).
433.222.122.211.1 Meaninglessness (793).
433.222.122.211.2 Absurdity (793–94).
433.222.122.211.21 The position is committed to something that is not widely recognized (793).
433.222.122.211.22 The position is in conflict with what is widely recognized (793–94).
433.222.122.211.23 Cause and effect become essentially mixed up (794).
433.222.122.211.24 Cause and effect become conceptually indistinguishable (794).
433.222.122.212 Refutation in terms of the conventional (794).
433.222.122.22 Refutation of arising from another (794–97).
433.222.122.221 Refutation in terms of reality (794–97).
433.222.122.221.1 Refuting that cause and effect are different (794–95).
433.222.122.221.2 Refuting that things arise from something that is different (795–97).
433.222.122.221.21 Absurd consequences (795–97).
433.222.122.221.211 Presenting the consequence (795).
433.222.122.221.212 Refuting the objections (795–97).
433.222.122.221.212.1 Identical reasons (795–96).
433.222.122.221.212.11 Appeals to appearance will fail (795–96).
433.222.122.221.212.12 Appeals to capacity will fail (796).
433.222.122.221.212.13 Appeals to the intrinsic nature will fail (796).
433.222.122.221.212.2 The entailment of a single conceptual distinction (796–97).
433.222.122.221.22 Refutation by means of analysis (797).
433.222.122.222 Refutation in terms of the conventional (797).
433.222.122.23 Refutation arising from both (797–98).
433.222.122.24 Refutation of uncaused arising (798).
433.222.122.3 The entailment (798).
433.222.123 The proven meaning's relation to scripture (798).
433.222.13 Refutation by examining effects (799–800).
433.222.131 Presentation of the argument (799).

Since, respectively, it would serve no purpose and be impossible
Neither the existent nor the non-existent could arise.[43]
Therefore, all entities have, by the very nature of things, since the beginning not occurred,
And so they are shown to be the natural transcendence of suffering [45d–46c].

433.222.132 Proving its probative power (799–800).
433.222.132.1 The subject (799).
433.222.132.2 The *probandum* (799).
433.222.132.3 The proof (799–800).
433.222.132.31 Establishing the property of the position (799–800).
433.222.132.311 Refutation of previously existent effects (799).
433.222.132.311.1 Refuting the existence of that which has not arisen (799).
433.222.132.311.2 Refuting the arising of that which exists (799).
433.222.132.312 Refutation of previously non-existent effects (799–800).
433.222.132.312.1 That which has no existence at all cannot perform any action (799).
433.222.132.312.2 The cause does not exist, since the cause for its designation is absent (799–800).
433.222.132.312.3 Absurdity follows as a consequence of the same reason being applied (800).
433.222.132.312.4 Examining effects that relinquish their non-existent nature (800).
433.222.132.312.5 Examining effects that do not relinquish their non-existent nature (800).
433.222.132.32 Establishment of the entailment (800).
433.222.133 The proven meaning's relation to scripture (800).
433.222.2 The argument that establishes oppositions in terms of the relative (800–04).
433.222.21 Presentation of the argument (800).
433.222.22 The significance of this proof (800–02).

Because they are produced by conditions
And because conventions, such as cause and effect, are mutually dependent
All phenomena are devoid of any essential nature.
It is an essence, which like fire's heat is unmistakenly intrinsic [to the given phenomenon]
That is understood to be, and spoken of as, [that phenomenon's] nature (Skt. *svabhāva*).
Something that depends on other designators
Or changes into something else
Cannot reasonably be the nature of the given phenomenon.
Therefore, since dependent origination implies mutual dependency and imputation

It cannot reasonably be natural.
All phenomena of dependent origination are, therefore, peace since the beginning
And the absence of arising and cessation is established as their nature [46d–49c].

433.222.221 The subject (800).
433.222.222 The *probandum* (800).
433.222.223 The proof (800–04).
433.222.223.1 Establishing the property of the position (800–01).
433.222.223.11 Identification of the meaning of dependent origination (801).
433.222.223.111 The meaning of the term (801).
433.222.223.112 The characteristics (801).
433.222.223.113 The divisions (801).
433.222.223.12 Establishing this with respect to that which appears (801).
433.222.223.2 The entailment (801–04).
433.222.223.21 Refuting the dependent origination of that which has a nature (801–03).
433.222.223.22 Refuting the nature of that which is dependent origination (803–04).
433.222.223.221 Refutation by pointing out the interdependencies involved in designation (803–04).
433.222.223.222 Refutation through an analysis in terms of established and unestablished essences (804).
433.222.223.223 Refutation through considering whether two mutually dependent things can be simultaneous or sequential (804).
433.222.23 Relating the argument, which is established by reasoning, to scripture (804).
433.223 Refutation of the emptiness that is the voidness of permanent and impermanent entities (804–06).

The thoroughly established, intrinsic nature can upon analysis
Neither be the same as nor different from the subject, the dependent nature.
Given that there is no object of negation in the form of an entity,
What sort of negation could be carried out to establish the absence of entity?
If all phenomena of entity and non-entity
Were not all empty of any essence of their own,
Their emptiness would be limited, the absence of one thing in another,
And such an emptiness has been criticized at length by the Victorious Ones[44] [49d–51c].

433.223.1 Refutation by examining whether emptiness is identical with or different from the subject (804–05).
433.223.2 Refutation in terms of the dependency on an object of negation (805).

433.223.3 The consequence of limited emptiness (805–06).
433.3 Summary of the meaning established by these refutations (806–07).

When the two extremes of existence and non-existence have in this way been dispelled
Dependent origination, which by nature is emptiness, constitutes the true truths.
This fundamental topic of knowledge is established as the meaning of the Middle Way;
Upon this the wise should always meditate [51d–52c].

5 The way to gain experience (807–13).

Because of the rivers of action and affliction (Skt. *kleśa*)
Sentient beings remain, as far as the sky is vast, within in an ocean of suffering.
With great compassion (Skt. *karuṇā*) *for them, free from reference point,*
One must rely on the relative mind of enlightenment (Skt. *bodhicitta*).
Then, through the equipoise of the space-like intrinsic nature
One must train in the insight that pacifies all constructs.
With respect to the ensuing attainment of the illusion-like relative,
One must train in generosity, discipline, patience, diligence and so forth
And thus thoroughly pursue the accumulation of merit (Skt. *puṇya*)
Without observing the three spheres (Skt. *trimaṇḍala*) *and through the mastery of skillful means* (Skt. *upāya*).
All of the ensuing virtue must, for the benefit of all wandering beings,
Beyond observation be dedicated towards great enlightenment.
The person who traverses the path of the Middle Way, the supreme vehicle,
By riding the chariot of the two ways will not be subdued
By the demons of inferior views, and without falling into the extremes of existence and peace,
Instead proceed to the great transcendence of suffering (Skt. *mahānirvāṇa*).
Therefore, anything else than the path of the Middle Way will not
Deliver enlightenment; this is what the Able One has taught [52d–57a].

51 Ascertainment of the nature of the path of the Middle Way. (807–13)
511 The preliminaries (807–09).
512 The main part (809–10).
512.1 The accumulation of wakefulness (Skt. *jñānasaṃbhāra*) in the equipoise (809–10).
512.2 The accumulation of merit (Skt. *puṇyasaṃbhāra*) during the ensuing attainment (810–11).
513 The conclusion (811–12).
52 The way one thereby emerges definitively (812).
53 Refuting that anything else is the path of liberation (812–13).

6 The fruition to be attained (813–19).

> *By becoming familiar with the ultimate wakefulness without appearance*
> *Ignorance and habitual tendencies will be permanently and thoroughly eliminated.*
> *Thus, through the complete pacification of the engagements in terms of cognizer and cognized*
> *The unarisen and unceasing body of qualities* (Skt. *dharmakāya*) *will, as one's own benefit, be achieved.*
> *Although the engagements of mind* (Skt. *citta*) *and mental states* (Skt. *caitta*) *have been pacified*
> *The previous accumulation of merit and aspirations will,*
> *For those disciples whose mental eye is like a bright mirror,*
> *Make manifest the reflections of the two form bodies* (Skt. *rūpakāya*), *which are the benefit for others*[45] [57a–58e].

61 Giving up unreasonable assertions about the fruition, the ground of Buddhahood (813–14).
62 The divisions of the qualities of Buddhahood (814).
63 Ascertainment of the nature of these qualities (814–19).
631 Refutation of the approach of others (814).
632 Presentation of our own approach (814–17).
632.1 Identification of the individual essences (815–16).
632.11 The support, the bodies (815–16).
632.12 The supported, the wisdoms (816).
632.13 The performed activities (816).
632.2 Concise categorization (816–17).
632.3 Contemplation of the causal relationship (817).
633 Rebuttal of objections (817–19).
633.1 Dismissing the objection that analyzes the cause for the annulment of awareness (817–18).
633.2 Dismissing the objection that efforts would be pointless (818).
633.3 Dismissing the objection that this contradicts scripture (818–19).

This completes the Middle Way [exposition entitled] *The Appearance of Reality*, composed by Jangchub Tsöndrü, a monk of the Śākya. There are 58 *ślokas*. Virtue! Let this be auspicious!

4.2 Tibetan text of the root verses of *The Appearance of Reality*[46]

དབུ་མ་རིགས་པའི་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་སྣང་བའི་རྩ་བ། འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། །བདེ་གཤེགས་
གསུང་གི་བརྗོད་བྱ་ཤེས་བྱའི་ལུས། །བགྲོད་པ་གཅིག་ལམ་མཐའ་བྲལ་དབུ་མའི་དོན། །འདི་དག་བདེན་པ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་ཆེ་བ་[x]།[47] །ཆོས་འདི་
གཞན་ལས་ཁྱད་པར་འཕགས་པ་ཡིན།(0) །བདེན་གཉིས་རྣམ་དབྱེ་རྣམ་པར་དཔྱད་པ་འདིར། །ངོ་བོ་དབྱེ་བ་སོ་སོའི་མཚན་ཉིད་དང་། །སྒྲུབ་བྱེད་
ཚད་མ་ཉམས་སུ་བླང་བའི་ཚུལ། །ཐོབ་བྱའི་འབྲས་བུ་དྲུག་གིས་རྣམ་པར་བཤད།(1) །ཇི་ལྟར་རབ་རིབ་མཐུ་ཡིས་དམིགས་པའི་ཡུལ། །རབ་
རིབ་མེད་བློའི་ཡུལ་དུ་མ་དམིགས་ལྟར། །དངོས་ཀུན་འཁྲུལ་དང་མ་འཁྲུལ་ཤེས་ངོ་ན། །རྟེན་འབྱུང་གཟོད་ནས་རབ་ཞི་བདེན་པ་
གཉིས།(2) །ཀུན་རྫོབ་རྣམ་གཉིས་འཇིག་རྟེན་བྱིས་པ་དང་། །སྣང་བཅས་འཕགས་པའི་ཤེས་ངོར་བདེན་པའོ། །དང་པོ་ལ་ནི་ཡང་དག་ལོག་པ་
སྟེ། །གནོད་བཅས་གནོད་མེད་དབང་པོའི་ཤེས་ཡུལ་ལོ།(3) །འཁྲུལ་མེད་འཕགས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཤེས་ཡུལ་ན། །ཤེས་བྱ་ཐམས་ཅད་རོ་མཉམ་
གཟིགས་གྱུར་པས། །ཆོས་ཉིད་དམ་པ་དོན་གྱི་བདེན་པ་ལ། །དབྱེ་བའི་སྤྲོས་པ་ཉེ་བར་ཞི་བ་ཡིན།(4) །ཁ་ཅིག་ཤེས་བརྗོད་ཙམ་དང་སྤྲོས་བྲལ་
ནི། །ཀུན་རྫོབ་དོན་དམ་མཚན་ཉིད་ཡིན་ཞེས་སྨྲ། །ཤེས་བརྗོད་གཞལ་བྱར་མངོན་སུམ་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པས། །དངོས་ལ་དོན་དམ་ལོག་
རྟོགས་མེད་པ་དང་།(5) །བདེན་པ་འགོག་པའི་རྗེས་དཔག་དོན་མེད་ཅིང་། །དངོས་རྣམས་དོན་དམ་མ་ཡིན་ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཏུ། །སྨྲས་པས་
དངོས་སྨྲའི་ལུགས་དང་མི་འགལ་འགྱུར། །མ་དཔྱད་འཁྲུལ་པའི་ཤེས་ཡུལ་ཀུན་རྫོབ་སྟེ།(6) །མ་འཁྲུལ་འཕགས་པའི་ཤེས་ཡུལ་དོན་དམ་
ཡིན། །རྣམ་དཔྱད་བློ་ཡིས་གཞིགས་ན་སྤྲོས་མེད་ཅིང་། །མ་དཔྱད་བློ་ཡིས་རྟེན་འབྱུང་མཐོང་བས་ན། །དོན་དམ་མཁའ་དང་ཀུན་རྫོབ་སྒྱུ་མའི་
ཚུལ།(7) །མཐའ་གཉིས་རབ་སྤངས་དབུ་མའི་དོན་དུ་ངེས། །ཉེས་ཀུན་འབྱུང་གནས་མེད་ལྟ་ཁ་ཅིག་ནི། །མ་མཐོང་འགྲོ་མེད་སེམས་ཀྱང་ལུས་
ཉིད་དང་། །བདག་ཉིད་གཅིག་པས་ལུས་ཀྱི་སྔ་ཕྱིར་མེད།(8) །ལས་དང་ལམ་གྱི་འབྲས་བུ་ཡོད་མིན་ཞིང་། །མ་མཐོང་འཇིག་རྟེན་ཕ་མའི་རྒྱུ་
མེད་ཟེར། །ཁ་ཅིག་མཐོང་བའི་རྒྱུ་ཡང་མེད་པར་འདོད། །བདག་དང་གཙོ་བོ་ལ་སོགས་རྟག་དངོས་དང་།(9) །གཟུང་བ་རྡུལ་དང་འཛིན་པ་
སྐད་ཅིག་མ། །གཟུང་འཛིན་གཉིས་མེད་ཤེས་པ་སྐད་ཅིག་མ། །ཆོས་ཙམ་རྫས་སུ་འདོད་པ་ཁ་ཅིག་སྨྲ། །དེ་ཡི་སྟོང་ཉིད་རིགས་པའི་ཡུལ་ཡིན་
ཞེས།(10) །སྟོང་པ་མཚན་མར་སྨྲ་བ་ཁ་ཅིག་འདོད། །ཁ་ཅིག་དངོས་པོ་སྟོབས་ཞུགས་ཚད་མ་ཡིས། །ཕྱོགས་གཉིས་དགག་སྒྲུབ་ངེས་
པ་ཡིན་ཞེས་སྨྲ། །རྗེས་རིགས་མ་གཏོགས་[48]ཁྱབ་ཆེས་མི་སྲིད་དང་།(11) །གཞལ་བྱ་འཇལ་བྱེད་དེ་ཉིད་གཞན་ཉིད་དུ། །དཔྱད་ན་མེད་
པས་ཚད་མའི་སྒྲ་ཡི་དོན། །དང་པོ་འཇལ་བ་འཐད་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། །བཅད་དོན་ཐོབ་བྱེད་ནུས་པ་མི་སླུ་བ།(12) །ཚད་མའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཡིན་
ཞེས་ཁ་ཅིག་སྨྲ། །མ་རྟོགས་ཡུལ་ལ་འཛིན་སྟངས་མི་འཁྲུལ་བ། །བློ་འདོགས་སེལ་བའི་དོན་རྟོགས་ཁ་ཅིག་འདོད། །དོན་དམ་ཚད་མ་མ་
གཏོགས་[49]དོན་གསལ་ལ།(13) །མི་སླུ་ཐ་སྙད་ཚད་མར་ཁ་ཅིག་སྨྲ། །དངོས་མེད་ཐོབ་བྱར་འགལ་ཞིང་དངོས་པོ་ཡི། །རྗེས་ཀྱང་སྐད་ཅིག་
ཡིན་པས་འཇལ་བྱེད་ལ། །བཅད་དོན་ཐོབ་པའི་ནུས་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།(14) །དངོས་པོའི་རྒྱུན་ལྟོས་བཅད་དོན་ཐོབ་ཅེ་ན། །མི་སླུ་མེད་པས་དངོས་
པོའི་རྗེས་ལ་ནི། །གང་གི་བློ་ཡང་ཚད་མར་མི་འགྱུར་ཞིང་། །རྒྱུན་ནི་རྗེས་ལས་གཞན་ན་རྟག་པ་དང་།(15) །གཞན་དུ་དམིགས་དང་རྗེས་
ལ་ལྟོས་མེད་འགྱུར། །རྗེས་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་ཡིན་ན་རྗེས་བཞིན་དུ། །དུ་མར་འགྱུར་བས་བཅད་དོན་ཐོབ་པ་མེད། །དེ་བཞིན་ལྡོག་པ་གཅིག་
ཀྱང་རྗེས་ལ་ནི།(16) །དེ་ཉིད་གཞན་དུ་དཔྱད་ན་མི་འཐད་པས། །དེ་ལའང་དཔྱད་དོན་ཐོབ་པ་མི་སྲིད་དོ། །དེ་ཕྱིར་མི་སླུ་བླུན་པོ་མཆར་སྐྱེད་
ཡིན། །མ་རྟོགས་ཡུལ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་རྗེས་རིག་[50]ལ།(17) །དཔྱད་ན་མ་ཁྱབ་ཧ་ཅང་ཁྱབ་ཆེས་པ། །ལས་དང་བྱེད་པོ་དེ་དང་གཞན་དངོས་
སུ། །དཔྱད་ན་མེད་པས་སྒྲོ་འདོགས་སེལ་མི་རུང་། །སྣང་ཞེན་གཉིས་ལ་འཁྲུལ་པའི་ལོག་ཤེས་ཀྱིས།(18) །ཡུལ་དང་མཚུངས་པས་དངོས་པོར་
སྣང་བ་དང་། །ཞེན་དང་གཉིས་ཀའི་ཡུལ་ན་བདེན་མི་འགྲུབ། །དོན་བྱེད་ནུས་པ་ཤེས་ན་དེ་ཉིད་ནི། །སྔར་དང་མཚུངས་པས་བསྒྲུབ་པར་ནུས་མ་
ཡིན།(19) །སད་པའི་ཤེས་ངོར་མེད་པས་རྨི་ལམ་དུའང་། །དངོས་པོ་རང་མཚན་ཉིད་དུ་མེད་ཤེས་ལྟར། །རིག་[51]ངོར་མེད་པས་ཐ་སྙད་ཉིད་དུ་
ཡང་། །རང་མཚན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་མ་སྐྱེས་རིག་པར་གྲོལ།(20) །འདས་དང་མ་འོངས་ཞིག་དང་མ་སྐྱེས་ཤིང་། །དབུས་གནས་ཆ་དང་བཅས་ཕྱིར་དངོས་
ལྟར་མེད། །བདག་ཉིད་གཅིག་ལ་འབྲེལ་ཡུལ་འབྲེལ་ཆོས་གཉིས། །མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར་དང་དེ་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡང་།(21) །གནས་སྐབས་འབྲེལ་པ་
གཞན་དུ་འཁྲུལ་འགྱུར་ཞིང་། །རང་བཞིན་འབྲེལ་བའི་རྣམ་དབྱེ་རྟེན་མི་འགྱུར། །དོན་དམ་ཚད་མ་མེད་ཅིང་དེ་མཚན་ནི། །ཧ་ཅང་ཁྱབ་དང་ཐ་
སྙད་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང་།(22) །མི་སླུ་མེད་པས་སྔར་ནི་བཤད་ཟིན་ཏོ། །བཟུང་བ་དངོས་པོར་མེད་པས་གཟུང་ཡུལ་ལ། །མ་འཁྲུལ་མངོན་སུམ་སྲིད་
པ་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། །རྩ་བ་འབྲེལ་བ་མེད་པས་མ་འཁྲུལ་བའི།(23) །རྟགས་ལས་འོངས་པའི་རྗེས་དཔག་སྲིད་མ་ཡིན། །འབྲེལ་པ་མེད་པར་རྟོག་
ལ་དོན་རྟོག་པའི། །ལུང་ཡང་ཚད་མ་ཉིད་དུ་མི་འཐད་དོ། །ཀུན་གྱིས་འདྲ་དང་ཕྱོགས་རེས་མི་འདྲ་བ།(24) །མེད་པས་ཉེ་བར་འཇལ་བའི་ཚད་མ་
ཡིས། །དཔེ་དང་གང་གིས་འདྲ་བར་འཇལ་བར་འགྱུར། །གཅིག་ཏུ་ཡོད་མེད་རྟག་དང་ཆད་པ་ཡི། །མཐའ་བྲལ་རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་འབྱུང་

དབུ་མའི་ལམ།(25) །ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཙམ་དུ་ཇི་ལྟར་ཁས་མི་ལེན། །ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཙམ་དུ་དབུ་མ་ཡོད་མིན་ན། །གང་ཟག་དབུ་མ་པར་ནི་གང་གིས་
གཞག །རང་ཕྱོགས་མེད་ཅིང་གཞན་ཕྱོགས་འགོག་པ་ཡི།(26) །གང་ཟག་དབུ་མ་པར་ནི་འདོད་ཅེ་ན། །རང་གཞན་ལྟོས་གྲུབ་ཡིན་པས་རང་
ཕྱོགས་ནི། །མེད་པས་གཞན་ཕྱོགས་ཡོད་མིན་དེ་ཡི་ཕྱིར། །ཁྱོད་ནི་ཅི་ཞིག་འགོག་ནས་ངལ་བར་འགྱུར།(27) །བདེན་གཉིས་དོན་ལ་དབུ་
མའི་ངག་སྦྱོར་བ། །ངག་དོན་གྲུབ་བསམ་མེད་ལ་བསྟན་འདོད་པའི། །བསྒྲུབ་བྱ་ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཙམ་དུ་ཇི་ལྟར་འདོད[52]། །ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཏུའང་ཚད་
མ་ཡོད་མིན་ན།(28) །གཞན་ཕྱོགས་བརྟན་པ་ཉིད་དུ་མེད[53]་ཞེས་ཕྱིར། །འགོག་འདོད་བློ་ནི་གང་ལས་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་ཞིང་། །ཆོས་གསུམ་ཁས་
བླངས་ཉིད་དུ་མི་ཞེས་པས། །གང་ཞིག་ལ་ནི་ཐལ་འགྱུར་དགོད་པར་བྱ།(29) །སྔ་ཕྱི་འགལ་བར་ཞེས་བྱེད་མེད་པ་ཡི། །ཐལ་འགྱུར་ཉིད་ཀྱང་
ཇི་ལྟར་འགྲུབ་འགྱུར་སྙོམས། །དངོས་སྟོབས་འོངས་པའི་ཚད་མ་ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཏུའང་། །ཡོད་མིན་པས་ན་རང་རྒྱུད་རྟགས་མེད་ལོ།(30) །འཇིག་
རྟེན་གྲགས་པའི་ཚད་མ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས། །དགག་བསྒྲུབ་ངེས་ཤིང་རྟགས་རྣམས་ཐལ་བར་འདོད། །སྐྱོང་བས་མ་རྟོགས་དོན་འཇལ་མངོན་སུམ་
གྱིས[54]། །ཚད་མ་དང་ནི་ཚུལ་གསུམ་རྟགས་ལས་དོན།(31) །འཇལ་བྱེད་རྗེས་དཔག་ཚད་མ་ཡིད་ཆེས་ཀྱི། །ཚིག་ལས་དོན་འཇལ་ལུང་དང་
དཔེ་ལས་ནི། །འདྲ་བའི་དོན་འཇལ་ཉེ་བར་འཇལ་བ་སྟེ། །འཇིག་རྟེན་གྲགས་པའི་ཚད་མ་རྣམ་བཞིར་བཤད།(32) །ཚུལ་གསུམ་ཁས་བླངས་
མཐར་ཐུག་རྟགས་ལས་དོན། །བསྒྲུབ་བྱ་ཕ་རོལ་བློ་ངོར་མཐའ་གཅིག་ཏུ། །ངེས་དང་ཟློག་པ་སྒྲུབ་པ་བྱེད་པ་དང་། །མགོ་སྙོམ་རྗོད་པའི་ཡན་
ལག་བཅལ་ཡུལ་ལ།[55] (33) །མ་གྲུབ་ཐལ་འགྱུར་ཆེན་པོ་རྣམ་བཞི་ཡིན། །སེམས་ནི་ཁ་དོག་དབྱིབས་དང་ལུས་ཀྱང་ནི། །འཛིན་ཆའི་ངོ་
བོར་དམིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་པས། །འགལ་བའི་ཆོས་ལྡན་རྫས་གཅིག་མི་རུང་ཕྱིར།(34) །ལུས་ཀྱི་སྔ་ཕྱིར་སེམས་ནི་མེད་མི་འགྲུབ། །རིག་
ཙམ་རིག་པ་སྔ་མ་ལས་སྐྱེས་ཤིང་། །ཕྱི་མ་བསྐྱེད་པར་རང་རིག་གིས་འགྲུབ་པས། །རིག་པའི་ཐོག་མཐའ་ཐུག་པ་ཁེགས་པ་ཡིན།(35) །དེ་
ལྟར་མིན་ན་མེ་མེད་དུ་བ་དང་། །འོད་མེད་སྔོན་མེ་གང་གིས་དགག་པར་བྱ། །ཀུན་དང་རང་གི་མངོན་སུམ་ལོག་པ་ནི། །མི་འགྲུབ་མ་
ངེས་ཕྱིར་ནི་འགྲོ་བའི་རིགས།(36) །མ་མཐོང་བ་རྣམས་དགག་པར་ནུས་མ་ཡིན། །ལས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་སྨིན་ཚེ་འདིར་མ་མཐོང་བས། །གཞན་
དུ་དགག་པར་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ལ། །གཞན་དུ་རིགས[56]་རྒྱུན་མེད་པར་བཀག་ཟིན་ཅིང་།(37) །བརྟན་ཡང་ལས་འབྲས་ངེས་པ་སྒྱུ་མ་
བཞིན། །ལུང་གིས་གྲུབ་ཅིང་ཚད་མ་སྲིད་པ་དང་། །ཐེ་ཚོམ་གྱིས་ཀྱང་འདི་དག་མི་སྤང་ངོ་། །དངོས་རྣམས་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཡིན་ན་ལྟོས་མེད་
ཕྱིར།(38) །ཡུལ་དུས་རྣམ་པར་ངེས་འགར་མི་འགྱུར་ལ། །ནམ་མཁའི་མེ་ཏོག་བཞིན་དུ་མི་སྣང་ཞིང་། །འབྲས་བུའི་ཆེད་དུ་རྩོལ་དོན་མེད་
འགྱུར། །རྒྱུན་གྱི་མཐར་འཇིག་དངོས་པོའི་སྐད་ཅིག་གིས།(39) །འཇིག་མེད་འགལ་ཞིང་གནས་སྐབས་འགྱུར་བས་ཀྱང་། །རང་བཞིན་རྟག་མིན་འབྲས་
བུའི་རིམ་ཅན་དང་། །འབྲེལ་པའི་ནུས་པ་ཇི་ལྟར་འགྱུར་མེད་ཡིན། །དུ་མ་དང་འབྲེལ་རང་བཞིན་གཅིག་ཉིད་དུ།(40) །མི་རིགས་ཕྱིར་ན་རྟག་
དངོས་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན། །ཕྱོགས་དང་དུས་ཆ་དུ་མ་དང་འབྲེལ་ཕྱིར། །ཡན་ལག་ཅན་མེད་རྡུལ་དང་སྐད་ཅིག་ཀྱང་། །ཕྱོགས་དུས་དུ་མའི་དབུས་
ན་གནས་པས་ན།(41) །དུ་མའི་ངོས་ལ་ལྟ་བྱེད་གཅིག་ཏུ་འགལ། །རྒྱུ་མེད་ཕྱིར་ན་དུ་མ་ཡོད་མིན་ཞིང་། །གཅིག་དང་དུ་མ་མེད་ན་ཇི་ལྟར་
དངོས། །གྲུབ་དང་གཅིག་ཤོས་དགོས་ནུས་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར།(42) །རང་ལས་སྐྱེ་མེད་གཞན་ལས་ཀྱང་མིན་ཏེ། །རྒྱུ་འབྲས་གཞན་དུ་འགལ་
ཞིང་གཞན་ཉིད་ན། །རྒྱུ་མིན་དང་མཚུངས་འགགས་དང་མ་འགགས་ཀྱི། །རྒྱུ་ལ་ནུས་དང་ཕན་འདོགས་མེད་ཕྱིར་རོ།(43) །སོ་སོའི་ཉེས་
པར་འགྱུར་ཞིང་རེ་རེ་ལ། །ནུས་པ་མེད་ཕྱིར་གཉིས་ལས་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། །རྒྱུ་མེད་མིན་ཏེ་དངོས་རྣམས་རེས་འགའ་དང་། །ཤེས་པའི་ཡུལ་དུ་
མཐོང་ཞིང་འབྲས་བུ་ཡི།(44) །ཆེད་དུ་རྒྱུ་ལས་རྩོལ་བ་དོན་བཅས་ཕྱིར། །སྐྱེ་བའི་རྣམ་པ་གཞན་མེད་མ་སྐྱེས་པའི། །དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་མིན་ནམ་
མཁའི་ཨུད་པལ་བཞིན། །དགོས་ནུས་མེད་པས་ཡོད་མེད་སྐྱེ་མེད་ཅིང་།(45) །སྐྱེ་བའི་མཐའ་གཞན་མེད་ཕྱིར་དངོས་པོ་རྣམས། །ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་
ཀྱིས་འདོད[57]་ནས་མ་སྐྱེས་པ། །དེ་ཕྱིར་རང་བཞིན་མྱ་ངན་འདས་པར་བསྟན། །ཆོས་ཀུན་རྐྱེན་གྱིས་བསྐྱེད་ཅིང་རྒྱུ་འབྲས་ཀྱི།(46) །ཐ་སྙད་ལ་
སོགས་ཕན་ཚུན་ལྟོས་པས་ན། །ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་མེའི་ཚ་བ་བཞིན། །འཁྲུལ་མེད་བདག་གིར་བྱེད་པའི་ངོ་བོ་ལ། །རང་བཞིན་ཤེས་ཤིང་རབ་ཏུ་བ
རྗོད་པ་ཡིན།(47) །ངོ་བོ་རྣམ་འཇོག་གཞན་ལ་ལྟོས་པ་དང་། །གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བའི་ཆོས་ལ་དེ་ཉིད་ནི། །མི་རིགས་ཕྱིར་ན་བརྟེན་ནས་འབྱུང་བ
ཉིད། །ཕན་ཚུན་བརྟེན་དང་རྣམ་པར་བརྟགས་པ་ནི།(48) །རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་དུ་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཕྱིར། །བརྟེན་འབྱུང་ཆོས་ཀུན་གཟོད་ནས་ཞི་བ
ཉིད། །རང་བཞིན་སྐྱེ་འགག་མེད་པར་གྲུབ་པ་ཡིན། །ཆོས་ཉིད་ཡོངས་གྲུབ་ཆོས་ཅན་གཞན་དབང་ལས།(49) །དེ་དང་གཞན་དུ་དཔྱད་ན་མི
རུང་ཞིང་། །དགག་བྱ་དངོས་པོ་མེད་ན་གང་ཞིག་ནི། །བཀག་པས་དངོས་པོ་མེད་པ་འགྲུབ་པར་འགྱུར། །དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་ཆོས་རྣམས
རང་རང་གི།(50) །ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་སྟོང་པ་མ་ཡིན་ན། །གཅིག་ལ་གཅིག་མེད་ཉི་ཚེའི་སྟོང་པ་ནི། །རྒྱལ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་རྣམ་གྲངས་དུ་མ
སྨད། །དེ་ལྟར་ཡོད་མེད་མཐའ་གཉིས་བསལ་ནས་ནི།(51) །རྟེན་འབྱུང་རང་བཞིན་སྟོང་ཉིད་བདེན་པ་གཉིས། །ཤེས་བྱའི་གནས་ཉིད་དབུ

མའི་དོན་དུ་སྒྲུབ། །འདི་ནི་མཁས་པས་རྟག་ཏུ་བསྒོམ་པར་བྱ། ལས་དང་ཉོན་མོངས་རྒྱུ་བོའི་སྡུག་བསྔལ་གྱིས།(52) །མཚོར་ཞུགས་ནམ་མཁར་གཏུགས་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་ལ། །དམིགས་པ་མེད་པའི་སྙིང་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིས། །ཀུན་རྫོབ་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་ནི་བརྟན་བྱ་སྟེ། །མཉམ་པར་བཞག་པའི་ཆོས་ཉིད་ནམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་བུ།(53) །སྤྲོས་ཀུན་ཞི་བའི་ཤེས་རབ་བསྒོམ་པར་བྱ། །རྗེས་ལས་ཐོབ་པའི་ཀུན་རྫོབ་སྒྱུ་མ་ལྟ་བུ། །སྦྱིན་དང་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་བཟོད་དང་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་སོགས། །བསོད་ནམས་ཚོགས་ནི་འཁོར་གསུམ་མི་དམིགས་པར།(54) །ཐབས་ལ་མཁས་པས་རབ་ཏུ་སྤྱད་པར་བྱ། །དེ་ཡི་དགེ་བ་འགྲོ་བ་ཀུན་གྱི་ཕྱིར། །བྱང་ཆུབ་ཆེན་པོར་མི་དམིགས་ཚུལ་གྱིས་བསྔོ། །སྐྱེ་བོ་གང་ཞིག་ཐེག་མཆོག་དབུ་མའི་ལམ།(55) །ཚུལ་གཉིས་ཤིང་རྟ་ཆེན་ནས་བསྒྲོད་པ་ནི། །ལྷ་དང་བདུད་ཀྱིས་མི་འཕྲོགས་སྲིད་ཞི་ཡི། །མཐར་མི་ལྟུང་བ་མྱང་འདས་ཆེན་པོར་འགྲོ། །དེ་ཕྱིར་དབུ་མའི་ལམ་ལས་གཞན་ལ་ནི།(56) །བྱང་ཆུབ་མེད་པར་ཐུབ་པས་གསུངས་པ་ཡིན། །དོན་དམ་སྣང་མེད་ཡེ་ཤེས་གོམས་པས་ནི། །མ་རིག་བག་ཆགས་གཏན་ནས་རབ་བཅོམ་པས། །ཤེས་དང་ཤེས་བྱའི་འཇུག་པ་ཉེར་ཞི་བ།(57) །སྐྱེ་འགག་མེད་པའི་རང་དོན་ཆོས་སྐུ་ཐོབ། །སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་འཇུག་པ་ཉེར་ཞི་ཡང་། །སྔོན་གྱི་བསོད་ནམས་ཚོགས་དང་སྨོན་ལམ་གྱིས། །བློ་མིག་མེ་ལོང་དག་པའི་གདུལ་བྱ་ལ། །གཞན་དོན་གཟུགས་སྐུ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་སྣང་བ་འབྱུང་།(58) །དབུ་མ་དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་སྣང་བའི་ཟླ་བ། ཤཱཀྱའི་དགེ་སློང་བྱང་ཆུབ་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཀྱིས་སྦྱར་བའོ། །ཤུ་ལོ་ཀ་ལྔ་བཅུ་རྩ་བརྒྱད་ཡོད་དོ།། དགེའོ།། བཀྲ་ཤིས་པར་གྱུར་ཅིག། །།

4.3 Topical outline of *dBu ma rigs pa'i tshogs kyi rgyan de kho na nyid snang ba*

bden pa gnyis rnam dbye rnam par dpyad pa 'dir:

1 ngo bo (755–57).[58]
2 dbye ba (757–59).
21 kun rdzob kyi dbye ba (757–58).
211 'jig rten gyi kun rdzob kyi bden pa (757).
211.1 'jig rten byis pa rang gi mtshan nyid du bden par rlom pa yang dag kun rdzob kyi bden pa (757).
211.2 blo des kyang rang mtshan du mi bden par shes pa'i snang ba log pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa (757).
212 'phags pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa (757–58).
22 don dam pa'i dbye ba (758).
3 mtshan nyid (759–62).
31 gzhan lugs dgag pa (759).
32 rang lugs gzhag pa (759).
33 de'i rang bzhin nges par bya ba (759–61).
331 kun rdzob kyi mtshan nyid (759–61).
332 don dam gyi mtshan nyid (760–61).
4 sgrub par byed pa'i tshad ma (761–807).
41 gzhan lugs dgag pa (761–62).
42 rang lugs gzhag pa (762).
43 de'i rang bzhin nges par bya ba (762–807).
431 dgag bya gzhan gyis brtag pa'i mtha' ngos bzung ba (762–63).
431.1 tha snyad du yang dgag bya med pa'i log rtog dgag pa (763).
431.2 dgag bya'i ngo bo ngos bzung ba (763).
431.3 [dgag bya'i] rab du dbye ba (763–67).

431.31 dngos por mi bden bzhin du snang ba snang yul la ’khrul pa’i log shes (763).
431.32 zhen yul la ’khrul pa’i log shes (763–65).
431.321 tha snyad la med par lta ba’i skur ba ’debs pa’i mtha’ (764–65).
431.321.1 don gyi ngo bo la skur ba ’debs pa (764).
431.321.2 ’bras bu la skur ba ’debs pa (764).
431.321.3 rgyu la skur ba ’debs pa (764–65).
431.322 yang dag par yod pa lta ba sgro ’dog pa’i mtha’ (765–67).
431.322.1 bdag dang rtso bo la sogs pa rtag pa gcig pu’i dngos po [yang dag par sgro ’dogs pa] (765–66).
431.322.2 gzung ’dzin gnyis dang gnyis med la sogs pa ’dus byas mi rtag pa du ma’i dngos po [yang dag par sgro ‘dogs pa] (766–67).
431.322.3 de dag gis stong pa’i stong nyid yang dag par sgro ’dogs pa (767).
432 de ’gog par byed pa’i rigs pa ngos gzung ba (768–82).
432.1 gzhan gyi lugs dgag pa (768–80).
432.11 gnyis ka la grub pa’i dngos po stobs zhugs kyi tshad ma dgag pa (768–77).
432.111 tshad ma spyir dgag pa (768–76).
432.111.1 tshad ma’i sgra don dgag pa (768–69).
432.111.2 tshad ma’i mtshan nyid dgag pa (769–77).
432.111.21 rtog ge ba rnams kyis brtags pa’i tshad ma’i mtshan nyid gzhag pa bshad pa (769–71).
432.111.22 [rtog ge ba rnams kyis brtags pa’ tshad ma’i mtshan nyid] dgag pa (771–76).
432.111.221 mi slu ba dgag pa (771–73).
432.111.222 bden don rtogs pa dgag pa (773–76).
432.111.222.1 don gyi dngos po snang ba dgag pa (773–75).
432.111.222.2 rjes su dpag pa ’dzin stangs mi ’khrul pa’i rgyu mtshan [dgag pa] (775–76).
432.111.223 slob dpon rgyan mkhan gyis / don dam pa dang tha snyad pa’i tshad ma’i mtshan nyid so sor ’jog pa yang mi ’thad (776).
432.111.224 slob dpon lha dbang blo gros kyis mi slu ba dang bden pa’i don rtogs gang yang rung bas tshad mar mtshon nus zhes so zer ba yang mi ’thad (776).
432.111.3 tshad ma’i nges byed dgag pa (776).
432.112 bye brag du dgag pa (776–77).
432.12 rang la tha snyad du bsgrub bya sgrub byed kyi rnam gzhag med par ’dod pa dgag pa (777–80).
432.13 de gnyis bkag pa la nang ’gal spang ba’o (780).
432.2 rang gi lugs gzhag pa (780–82).
433 rigs pas dgag bya dgag pa’o (782–807).
433.1 mtha’ snyad du med pa’i mtha’ dgag pa (782–85 and 813–14).
433.11 ngo bo la skur ba ’debs pa dgag pa (782–83).
433.111 sgrub byed [med pas dgag pa] (783).
433.112 snod byed yod pas [dgag pa] (783).
433.12 ’bras bu la skur ba ’debs pa dgag pa (783–84 and 813–14).
433.121 las kyi ’bras bu med par dgag pa (783–84).

433.122 lam kyi ’bras bu la skur ba ldebs pa (813–14).
433.13 rgyu la skur ba ’debs pa dgag pa (784–85).
433.2 yang dag par yod pa’i mtha’ dgag pa (785–806).
433.21 sgrub byed dgag pa (785–86).
433.22 snod byed brjod pa (786–806).
433.221 rtag pa’i dngos po [dgag pa] (786–87).
433.221.1 dngos po gzhi dang bcas la rtag pa dgag pa (786).
433.221.2 rtag pa gzhi bcas la’ang dngos po dgag pa (786–87).
433.221.3 rtag pa’i dngos po’i rang ldog nas spyir dgag pa (787).
433.222 mi rtag pa’i dngos po [dgag pa] (787–804).
433.222.1 yang dag ’brel yul dgag pa’i gtan tshigs (787–800).
433.222.11 dngos po’i ngo bo la dpyad pa dgag pa (787–93).
433.222.111 gcig dang du bral gyi gtan tshigs [kyi] rtags dgod pa (787).
433.222.112 [gcig dang du bral gyi gtan tshigs] sbyor ba’i tshul sgrub pa (787–93).
433.222.112.1 chos can (787).
433.222.112.2 bsgrub bya (787–90).
433.222.112.21 gzhan lugs dgag pa (788).
433.222.112.22 rang lugs gzhag pa (788).
433.222.112.23 de dag la skyon spang ba (788–90).
433.222.112.231 don dam pa ma yin dgag bsgrub byar mi byed pa [la rtsod pa spang ba] (788–89).
433.222.112.232 kun rdzob du [ma yin dgag bsgrub byar] byed pa la rtsod pa spang ba] (789–90).
433.222.112.3 gtan tshigs (790–93).
433.222.112.31 phyogs chos [bsgrub pa] (790–92).
433.222.112.311 dgag bya gcig dang du ma ngos gzung ba (790).
433.222.112.312 de ltar snang ba la dgag pa (790–92).
433.222.112.312.1 bden pa’i gcig dgag pa (790–92).
433.222.112.312.11 rag pa yan lag can gcig yin pa dgag pa (790–91).
433.222.112.312.12 de rtsom byed phra mo yan lag can gcig yod pa dgag pa (791–92).
433.222.112.312.121 [rdul phran cha med dgag pa] (791–92).
433.222.112.312.121.1 phrad dang ma phrad nas [dgag pa] (791).
433.222.112.312.121.2 bltas dang ma bltas [nas dgag pa] (791–92).
433.222.112.312.121.3 ring thung gi lhag pas dgag pa (792).
433.222.112.312.122 [shes pa skad cig cha med dgag pa] (792).
433.222.112.312.2 des bden pa’i du ma’ang khegs par bsgrub pa (792).
433.222.112.313 bkag pa la skyon spang ba (792).
433.222.112.32 khyab pa [bsgrub pa] (792).
433.222.113 [gcig dang du bral gyi gtan tshigs] grub pa’i rtags lung dang sbyar ba (792–93).
433.222.12 dngos rnam gyi rgyu la dpyad pas dgag pa (793–98).
433.222.121 rtags dgod pa (793).
433.222.122 sbyor ba’i tshul bsgrub pa (793–98).

433.222.122.1 gtan tshig gi don (793).
433.222.122.2 phyogs chos bsgrub pa (793–98).
433.222.122.21 rang las skye ba dgag pa (793–94).
433.222.122.211 de kho na nyid [du dgag pa] (793–94).
433.222.122.211.1 don med pa (793).
433.222.122.211.2 ha cang thal ba (793–94).
433.222.122.211.21 ma grags pa'i don thob pa (793).
433.222.122.211.22 grags pa'i don ma thob pa (793–94).
433.222.122.211.23 rgyu 'bras ngo bos chol ba (794).
433.222.122.211.24 ldog pa mtshung par 'gyur ba (794).
433.222.122.212 tha snyad du dgag pa (794).
433.222.122.22 gzhan las skye ba dgag pa (794–797).
433.222.122.221 de kho na nyid [du dgag pa] (794–97).
433.222.122.221.1 rgyu 'bras la gzhan dgag pa (794–95).
433.222.122.221.2 gzhan las skye ba dgag pa (795–97).
433.222.122.221.21 ha cang thal ba[s dgag pa] (795–97).
433.222.122.221.211 thal ba brjod pa (795).
433.222.122.221.212 de'i lan dgag pa (795–97).
433.222.122.221.212.1 rgyu mtshan mtshung pa (795–96).
433.222.122.221.212.11 snang ba [lan du mi rung ba] (795–96).
433.222.122.221.212.12 nus pa [lan du mi rung ba] (796).
433.222.122.221.212.13 chos nyid [lan du mi rung ba] (796).
433.222.122.221.212.2 ldog pa gcig pa'i khyab pa (796–97).
433.222.122.221.22 rnam par btags pas dgag pa (797).
433.222.122.222 tha snyad du dgag pa (797).
433.222.122.23 gnyis ka las skye ba dgag pa (797–98).
433.222.122.24 rgyu med par skye ba dgag pa (798).
433.222.122.3 khyab pa [bsgrub pa] (798).
433.222.123 grub pa'i don lung dang sbyar ba (798).
433.222.13 'bras bu dpyad pa dgag pa (799–800).
433.222.131 rtags dgod pa (799).
433.222.132 sbyor ba'i tshul bsgrub pa (799–800).
433.222.132.1 chos can (799).
433.222.132.2 bsgrub bya (799).
433.222.132.3 gtan tshigs (799–800).
433.222.132.31 phyogs chos bsgrub pa (799–800).
433.222.132.311 'bras bu sngar yod pa [skye ba dgag pa] (799).
433.222.132.311.1 ma skye pa la yod pa [skye ba dgag pa] (799).
433.222.132.311.2 yod pa la skye ba dgag pa (799).
433.222.132.312 'bras bu sngar med pa skye ba dgag pa (799–800).
433.222.132.312.1 rten med pas bya ba 'gal ba (799).
433.222.132.312.2 rnam 'jog med pas rgyu mi 'grub pa (799–800).
433.222.132.312.3 rgyu mtshan mtshung pas ha cang thal ba (800).
433.222.132.312.4 med pa'i rang bzhin dor [la brtags pa] (800).
433.222.132.312.5 med pa'i rang bzhin ma dor la brtags pa (800).

433.222.132.32 khyab pa bsgrub pa (800).
433.222.133 grub pa'i don lung dang sbyar ba (800).
433.222.2 tha snyad du 'gal zla sgrub pa'i gtan tshigs (800–04).
433.222.21 rtags dgog pa (800).
433.222.22 gtan tshigs kyi don (800–02).
433.222.221 chos can (800).
433.222.222 bsgrub bya (800).
433.222.223 gtan tshigs (800–04).
433.222.223.1 phyogs chos sgrub pa (800–01).
433.222.223.11 rten 'brel gyi don ngos gzung ba (801).
433.222.223.111 sgra'i don (801).
433.222.223.112 mtshan nyid (801).
433.222.223.113 dbye ba (801).
433.222.223.12 de ji ltar snang ba la sgrub pa (801).
433.222.223.2 khyab pa (801–04).
433.222.223.21 rang bzhin gzhir bcas la rten 'byung dgag pa (801–03).
433.222.223.22 rten 'byung gzhir bcas la rang bzhin dgag pa (803–04).
433.222.223.221 rnam 'jog la ltos pa phan tshun rten pas dgag pa (803–04).
433.222.223.222 ngo bo grub pa dang ma grub par brtags pas dgag pa (804).
433.222.223.223 de gnyis ka dus mnyam pa dang mi mnyam pa brtags pas dgag pa (804).
433.222.23 rigs pa'i grub pa'i rtags lung dang sbyar ba (804).
433.223 de dag gis stong pa nyid dgag pa (804–06).
433.223.1 chos can dang de nyid gzhan du dpyad pa dgag pa (804–05).
433.223.2 dgag bya la ltos pa'i dgag pa (805).
433.223.3 nyi tshe ba'i stong pa nyid du 'gyur ba (805–06).
433.3 de dag bkag pas grub pa'i don bsdu ba (806–07).
5 nyams su blang ba'i tshul (807–13).
51 dbu ma'i lam gyi rang bzhin nges par bya ba (807–13).
511 sbyor (807–09).
512 dngos (809–10).
512.1 mnyam gzhag ye shes kyi tshogs bsag pa (809–10).
512.2 rjes la thob pa bsod nam kyi tshogs bsag pa (810–11).
513 rjes (811–12).
52 des nges par byung ba'i tshul (812).
53 de las gzhan thar pa'i lam dgag pa (812–13).
6 thob par bya ba'i 'bras bu (813–19).
61 'bras bu sangs rgyas kyi sa mi 'thad pa spang ba (813–14).
62 de'i yon tan gyi dbye ba (814).
63 de dag gi rang bzhin nges par bya ba (814–19).
631 gzhan gyi lugs dgag pa (814).
632 rang gi lugs gzhag pa (814–17).
632.1 so so'i ngo bo ngos zung ba (815–16).
632.11 rten sku (815–16).
632.12 rten pa ye shes (816).

632.13 mdzad pa ’phrin las (816).
632.2 rigs bsdu ba (816–17).
632.3 rgyun ’brel ba bsam pa (817).
633 de la skyon spang ba (817–19).
633.1 rig pa ldog pa’i rgyu brtags nas mi ’thad pa spang ba (817–18).
633.2 ’bad pa don med pa spang ba (818).
633.3 lung dang ’gal ba spang ba’o (818–19).

Notes

1 The verses have here been entered into the text of the outline at the particular places they appear in the commentary. It should, however, be noted that the passages of the root-text often cover topics that subsequently are treated under several, consecutive headings. Mabja’s use of the *sa bcad* system is, in this way, slightly unusual as he often cites verses from the root text *before* the actual heading under which they are treated.

2 The numbers in parenthesis refer to the pagination in the Tibetan text published in 2006.

3 The colophon to the root text specifies that it contains 58 stanzas (*The Appearance of Reality* 748). I have therefore chosen to leave the intial stanza without numbering.

4 See above, Chapter 2.1.2.

5 See Chapter 2.1.4.

6 Mabja here argues that, if “being a mere object of cognition” and “absence of constructs” were respectively the characteristics of the relative and ultimate truths, stating that “things exist in terms of the relative” would mean simply that things are cognizable, whereas claiming that “things do not exist in terms of the ultimate” would mean merely that they are not inconceivable (i.e. *not* beyond *prapañca*). Hence, on such definitions the Mādhyamika’s presentation of the two truths would not be opposed to the views of the realists, who indeed hold that things are cognizable and conceivable.

7 Cf. Chapters 2.1.2–4 and 2.3.2.

8 Cf. Chapters 2.1.2–4 and 2.3.2.

9 On Mabja’s identification of the object of negation, see Chapter 2.3.1.

10 On *snang yul* and *zhen yul* in Chapa’s philosophy, see Hugon 2011 and Dreyfus 1997, 322–26. Mabja acknowledges that these terms originate with “the logicians” (Tib. *rtog ge ba*), but reinterprets them so that in his system any presence of such objects is the expression of delusion (Skt. *bhrānta*, Tib. *’khrul pa*). See Chapter 2.3.1.

11 See above, n. 10.

12 On *stong pa mtshan ma smra ba*, see pp. 23 and 57.

13 See above, Chapter 2.1.6.

14 Mabja here argues that, if *pramāṇa* would imply the “initial evaluation” (Tib. *dang por ’jal ba*) of a given substance, this would make all minds *pramāṇa*, since all substances are momentary. Hence such a construal of the term would be an instance of the flaw of “overextension” (Tib. *khyab che ba’i skyon*). If, on the other hand, the initial evaluation were with respect to kinds (Skt. *jāti*, Tib. *rigs*), there could, he argues, never be any *pramāṇa*, because there is no thing of which the mere general kind has not already been encountered, and even if there were such things, ordinary experiences of, for example, a patch of blue would then not be *pramāṇa*, since those cases would clearly not be “initial evaluations” (Tib. *dang por ’jal ba*) of the given “kind.”

15 If the evaluated object (Skt. *prameya*) and the evaluating agent (Skt. *pramāṇa*) were one and the same, there could be no activity, since nothing can act on itself. If,

alternatively, they were distinct, they would either be separated in time, or otherwise, because of their simultaneity, not possibly related as cause and effect.

16 Mabja specifies that this refutation concerns Dharmottara's (750–810) contention, based on *Pramāṇavārttika* II. 1, that being "undeceiving" (Skt. *avisaṃvādi*, Tib. *mi bslu ba*) alone suffices as a definition of reliable means of cognition. On this definition and the implied "power to obtain the determined object" (Tib. *bcad don thob pa'i nus pa*), see Dreyfus 1991 and 1997, 289–93 and 299–307.

17 While Mabja associates this account with Śaṅkaranandana, it is also central to Chapa's understanding of *pramāṇa*. See Hugon 2008a and 2011 as well as Dreyfus 1997, 299–307 and 365–69. Mabja further specifies that on this view the definition of *pramāṇa* is "realization of a true/real state of affairs" (Tib. *bden pa'i don rtogs pa*), which we now know is Chapa's definition. See Hugon 2008a and 2011.

18 This definition of ultimate versus relative *pramāṇa* (based on Dharmakīrti's *Commentary on Reliable Means of Cognition* II. 5 and II. 2, respectively) is associated with Prajñākaragupta (740–800). See Dreyfus 1991.

19 Even if we were to allow, Mabja argues, that reliable means of knowledge access so-called "continua" (Skt. *saṃtāna*, Tib. *rgyun*) of things that are otherwise of a momentary substance, this would mean that no such means could ever access the actual substance (Skt. *dravya*) of entities.

20 See above, p. 24.

21 The argument here resembles the critique of the idea of "initial evaluation" (Tib. *dang por 'jal ba*). See p. 137 n. 14.

22 Mabja here argues that upon analysis no mind – whether non-conceptual or conceptual – can be distinguished from what the world holds to be mistaken and delusional.

23 See above, Chapter 2.1.3.

24 In this critique of the principle of "relation" (Skt. *pratibandha*, Tib. *'brel pa*) as the basis for definitive (Skt. *niścita*, Tib. *nges pa*) inference, Mabja argues that, in the absence of two distinct things, identity relations cannot be actual instances of relation. Of the two types of relations accepted by Dharmakīrtian *pramāṇa* theory, this leaves us with causal relations. Yet, in the case of the latter, it is impossible to determine any intrinsic relations (Skt. *svabhāvapratibandha*, Tib. *rang bzhin gyis 'brel pa*), which are the only ones that could guarantee the infallible certainty of an inference drawn from it. On intrinsic relations as the basis for inference in Dharmakīrti's system, see Dunne 2004, 145–222.

25 The point being that Prajñākaragupta's definition of ultimate *pramāṇa* as the "illuminator of the hitherto not realized" (based on *Pramāṇavārttika*, II. 5: *ajñātārthaprakāśo vā/*) cannot be coherently separated from what is characteristic of conventionally reliable means of knowledge. In other words, the definition includes too much, since it applies to conventional *pramāṇa* as well.

26 On Devendrabuddhi's *pramāṇa* definition (630–90), see Dunne 2004, 253–56.

27 Cf. above, Chapters 2.1.4, 2.1.6, and 2.3.1.

28 See above, Chapter 2.1.6.

29 See above, Chapter 2.1.5.

30 See above, Chapter 2.1.6.

31 See above, Chapter 2.2.1.

32 See above, Chapters 2.1.7 and 2.2.1.

33 In *Ornament of Reason* (43–44) Mabja explains this fourfold typology of Madhyamaka *prasaṅgas* in the following way:

> There are four types of consequential argument. In an *inference acknowledged by others*, the property of the position and the entailment are established for the opponent. Based on that, the thesis is then proven definitively from the perspective of the opposing side, thereby causing them to reject their own position. In a *consequential argument that expresses contradiction*, an opponent's position is

dispensed with by letting the opponent come to the conclusion that the way the property of the position, the entailment, and the exclusion are established to them makes them implicitly committed to the opposite of their own position. *Equivalence of identical reasons* is used against someone who applies the same reason to reach two different conclusions. This consequence serves to show that, since the applied reason is the same in both cases, the conclusions one draws cannot be differentiated and must, hence, be identical as well. Finally, *lack of establishment due to [the proof] being equal to that which is sought proven* is applied to show that the realist's proof lacks establishment because it takes for granted that which has yet to be proven. Moreover, it also reveals that the flaws perceived by the realist in the Middle Way position are just as devoid of establishment as the realist's own probandum. Hence, it shows that an element applied in the debate lacks establishment in the object of the debate.

thal 'gyur gyi rtags kyi dbye ba ni phyogs chos khyab pa pha rol la grub pa'i rtags kyis pha rol gyi ngor mtha' gcig tu nges pa'i dam bca' bsgrubs nas gzhan phyogs sel ba gzhan la grags pa'i rjes dpag dang / phyogs chos khyab pa gsal ba gsum pha rol la grub pas pha rol gyi ngor bzlog pa 'phang pa'i sgo nas gzhan phyogs sel ba 'gal ba brjod pa'i thal 'gyur dang / rgyu mtshan mtshung kyang rgyu mtshan can mi mtshungs par 'dod pa la rgyu mtshan mtshungs pa'i sgo nas rgyu mtshan can yang mtshung par bsgre ba rgyu mtshan mtshungs pa'i 'go snyoms dang / dngos por smra ba'i sgrub byed bsgrub bya dang mthsungs par ma grub pa dang / dbu ma pa'i phyogs la skyon thams cad bsgrub bya dang mtshung par ma grub pas rtsod pa'i yan lag gang la brtsod pa'i yul de la ma grub pa bsgrub bya dang mtshung pa'i ma grub pa dang bzhi yin la /.

34 See above, Chapter 2.1.7.

35 On this argument (Tib. *gcig du bral kyi gtan tshigs*) in the Tibetan tradition, see Tillemans 1982, 1983a, 1983b. Mabja's discussion follows the classical treatment of the argument in Śāntarakṣita's *Ornament of the Middle Way* (see Mipham 2004 and Blumenthal 2004).

36 Just as Śāntarakṣita does in the *Ornament of the Middle Way*, Mabja here employs Vasubandu's critique of atomic particles as found in the latter's *Twenty Stanzas*: If the allegedly atomic particles have no spatial extension they cannot conglomerate to form coarse entities; yet if they do extend in space they will then also have parts that face in the various directions, and so they cannot be simple, singular entities. See Kapstein 2001, 191–204.

37 Multiplicity requires, the argument goes, the presence of several, constituent units, yet when phenomena are tested for singularity, we find nothing that cannot be further analyzed. Hence, in the absence of "one" there cannot either be "many." On the "argument from absence of one and many, see above, n. 35.

38 This line is not cited in the commentary.

39 I.e. if cause and effect were characterized by simple difference, there would be nothing that could relate them in the way that is required for causality.

40 Mabja here argues that, once it has been excluded that things could arise from themselves or from other things, it will already have been implicitly refuted that they arise through a combination of themselves and other things. Thinking in terms of such a combination would only compound the flaws that were noticed with respect to the former two options.

41 I.e. that which is beyond causality cannot be encountered.

42 I.e. apart from the four (arising from self, other, both and uncaused arising) that were just dismissed.

43 I.e. while the arising of something that already exists is meaningless, that which is non-existent is, by definition, also unarisen.

44 See above, Chapter 2.1.6.

45 See above, Chapters 2.3.1–2.
46 Expanded *dbu can* reproduction of the frequently contracted *dbu med* root verses that appear in the *dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang* edition, vol. 13: 745–48.
47 I have not been able to determine the last syllable of this line. The translation assumes the earlier *kyis* should have been *kyi*.
48 *Sic*. Autocommentary reads *ma rtogs*.
49 *Sic*. Autocommentary reads *ma rtogs*.
50 *Sic*. Autocommentary reads *rigs*.
51 *Sic*. Autocommentary reads *rigs*.
52 The translation here follows the autocommentary, which reads: *ji ltar med*.
53 *Sic*. Autocommentary reads *ma shes*.
54 *Sic*. Autocommentary reads *gyi*.
55 *Sic.* Autocommentary reads *gzod*.
56 *Sic*.
57 Since the root text is at this point illegible, it has here been reconstructed based on the citation found in the autocommentary, p. 799.
58 The numbers in brackets refer to the pagination of the relevant passage in *dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang* 2006.

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Notes

1 Numbering according to the Tōhoku University enumeration of the texts contained in the *sDe dge* edition of the Tibetan cannon.

2 On the attribution of this text to Patsab, see Chapter 3.1.1.

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